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REFLECTIONS

ON

THE NATURE AND TENDENCY

OF THE

PRESENT SPIRIT OF THE TIMES,

IN A

LETTER

TO THE FREEHOLDERS

OF THE

COUNTY OF NORFOLK.

BY THE REV. GEORGE BURGESS, B. A.

VICAR OF HALVERGATE AND OF MOULTON.

NORWICH:

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PREFACE.



I CANNOT send these "*REFLECTIONS*" forth to the public without a word or two, though it may be of no great avail, in extenuation of the errors which will be found to cleave to them. I wish the reader then to recollect, that I give them in the form of a "*LETTER*," an apology usually for an unsettled arrangement of our thoughts; and that from reflections thrown together in almost any manner, in perilous times like the present, some advantages may be reaped; some rudiments of correct judgment may here and there be gathered up, which a clearer mind and a staidier consideration may be enabled to turn to good.

I have laboured too under some inconvenience from finding myself compelled to go over again, as it were, the ground I had already occupied in my "*LETTER TO MR. COKE*." The more fully advertiing to certain subjects incidentally treated of there, may have exposed me to the danger of occasionally falling, though I hope in no great degree, into a repetition of the same sentiments. I have had time without a commensurate leisure. My removal into residence has exposed both my papers and my thoughts to some confusion, and which, I fear, has been productive of more oversights than it will be found I have remedied. My distance too from the Press, careful as the Printer has been, has subjected the work to errors (not alone typographical), that, when committed, could be but partially rectified.

Under these circumstances, the reader must look for nothing in the following pages beyond a mere desultory tract of thought spread over a large surface, sometimes keeping to, sometimes deviating

from the subject, and alternately touching upon and neglecting the heart of the inquiry. Yet I will not conceal that these apologies are made and these extenuations solicited, rather for defects in the arrangement of my Reflections than for the reflections themselves, since I know not that, more favourably situated, I could have done better by the general argument, or produced a better work. I almost believe, though it is mortifying to confess it, that I could not. Though, however, the subject has suffered under my hands, a circumstance that no one can regret more sincerely than myself, and though in these pages I may be said rather to have brought together materials for a future, than to have bequeathed to the public a present performance, I still think that I may lay claim to one merit. I have set the tone of feeling for the present emergency. I have given the language we ought to use, and the principles we ought to entertain. None other will be worthy of us. None other will avail us.

I must, finally, observe that these Reflections would have been published, cast in a somewhat different form, had I seen or heard nothing of Mr. Coke, of the City of Norwich, or of the Freeholders of Norfolk. That I have chosen this particular mode of address is owing to mere contingency; to the fair field in which I was placed for observation on the day of our late county election, through the courtesy of a gentleman well known for his constitutional principles, and for being the best friend of the people, by being the best friend to the throne.

The first part of this Letter, extending to p. 92, I had thoughts of considerably abridging, the subject having become somewhat obsolete. However, I venture it with the rest, though in so doing I am doubtful whether I have done right.

AT length, gentlemen, the important business of returning representatives to a new parliament is at an end. At length we breathe from our political commotions and labours. Some we have sent with heavy hearts to their bed of gloom, and others to repose on their couch of victory. While *Smith* and *Gurney* are in the exercise of their senatorial functions, the former a seasoned veteran, the latter a raw and awkward country recruit, while *Coke* and *Wodehouse* are both equally on the alert, the one to support, the other to derange certain old-fashioned principles that have for ages obtained among us, but that are now, through the increasing light of the times, getting somewhat out of date; we shall not perhaps be unusefully employed, if, like travellers at the decline of day, we review the steps we have already trod, and cast forward a searching eye on the road we are about to journey, and the prospect that lies darkly swimming before us. Where our adversaries retire fighting, and threaten soon to be with us again, we must look on nothing as gained but our present advantage, nothing as sure but the ground we at present stand on.

The success of *Edmond Wodehouse, Esq.* through your auspices, has been such as to crown both him and yourselves with honour. You received him a

short while back as a stranger, with only his character and his family connections as his letter of recommendation; you have now, for the second time, returned him as your esteemed representative; and you have so returned him as to convince his haughty colleague and all who witnessed your proceedings, that, whoever may, in future, be proposed or rejected as a fit candidate for the county of Norfolk, Edmond Wodehouse, Esq. is safe—safe, because he has himself acted so honourably, and because he thus, in return, secures the honourable and consistent conduct of his constituents. We had, indeed, on the late exercise of our elective franchise, no county contest, and no county contest was needed. Let the result have been never so decisive, it could have added neither to Mr. Wodehouse's triumph, nor to Mr. Coke's regret. That triumph has already been sufficiently gratifying, and that regret, believe me, sufficiently galling.

Some apology, gentlemen, may be due for addressing to you the following reflections, and especially at such a distance of time from the event to which I allude. I have not been altogether an idle spectator of what has lately passed in rapid succession before us. I was witness to a large portion of both our city and our county proceedings, and I thought I saw in both much which a serious mind could not, and which an honest mind dared not to commend. The meeting of freeholders on Tuesday, the 23d June, 1818, the day of election for the county, gave rise, on the part of Mr. Coke and his adherents, to certain exercises in oratory of a very objectionable nature. It was not perhaps prudent that the proceedings of that day should have gone forth, as they did, intirely uncommnted upon. What is said and done in Norfolk will have its influence beyond Norfolk. What is said and done under Mr. Coke's name and sanction will find its weight, be it said or done never so preposterously. Norfolk is not an insulated spot. It is

a large and populous county, politically important, agriculturally important, so important indeed as justly to be denominated "the garden of England." By this chain Mr. Coke, not unably seconded by the writings of his friend Dr. Rigby, has contrived to give it a sort of federal connection with every part of the British Empire. I wish this connection was for agricultural purposes only.

There may have been reasons, though I confess I saw them not, why Mr. Coke's speech at this election, of an hour and a half long, was not more adverted to by Colonel Wodehouse, or others of the party, at the time of its delivery, but no reason why, at greater leisure, we should not bring it before the tribunal of that public to which it was addressed, and there let it receive its reproof where it exploded its mischief. The suffering these idle declamations to float upon the popular mind and ear, in any dress the editors of our provincial papers chuse to bestow upon them, (though certainly no dress that they have the courage to array them in comes, in any manner, up to their pure, native, deformity of thought,) is, to say the least of it, ill policy. Unanswered calumnies, usurping the form, will sometimes, and with some people, pass for the body of virtue. The public have been too much abused by these stated political anathemas, and men have been lifted into idols for their patriotism, who deserved to be branded with infamy for their seditions. The poison is indeed rolled up in pleasant forms; but, put on what shapes of glosing, gossipping eloquence it may, come it from county members, or city demagogues, or Union Society delegates, or Socinian sanctuaries, it is still, in its effects, poison, rank, and gross.

Gentlemen, so far as the county of Norfolk is concerned, you have my apology for addressing you on the present occasion. Excuse me, however, if I add,

that in these "reflections on the nature and tendency of the present spirit of the times," I look *beyond* the county of Norfolk, and its representatives in parliament. Had I not done so, I would have added nothing to what I have already written. But a larger, a more serious field is before us, and to that field it is that I shall direct the greater part of my attention, and solicit the principal portion of yours. It is not Mr. Coke to whom I am an enemy, nor Mr. Wodehouse to whom I am a friend; but I am adverse to the public sentiments of the one, and cordially unite me with the constitutional deportment of the other. Under these circumstances, were it any man beside Mr. Coke, I must become his political opponent; were it any man beside Mr. Wodehouse, I should, to the best of my ability, be his political advocate and friend. Between these gentlemen, in their domestic relations, I know no difference. I have no feelings in unison, or at variance with either of them. I am equally a stranger to them both. I trust, therefore, with the unprejudiced part of my readers, to stand clear of aught in the shape of *personal* regards or resentments.

As to what reception a letter of this kind may meet with from either party, that must not be suffered to concern me. Mr. Wodehouse may not like it. Mr. Coke may go further, he may not read it. He may not even be conscious of its publication. I can forgive any and every neglect of it that he or his admirers may meditate. In this point our pride, I suspect, is pretty equal; for while they may be devising how to treat me with scorn for my presumption, I am secretly scorning myself for condescending to notice such sorry political drivellers at all. I know too well the stubbornness with which men cling to their own preconceived notions, and that, as Mr. Bedingfield observed, "it is hardly possible to persuade those who differ from us in opinion on political subjects, into our

own way of thinking."* With no hopeless views of this kind have I been actuated on the present occasion. What I do, and I do it I assure you in all humility, is not to convince those who dissent from, but to confirm those who are, in some measure, neutralized in their feelings, or who may already be disposed to agree with us in opinion. This, if I am able in the slightest degree to effect, I shall willingly leave Mr. Coke and his party to their accustomed favourite employments, to rant about the oppressions of the people, the sins of the government, the curse of Toryism, and, "bedaubed with ribbands and rubbish," the immaculate purity of their own whig principles.

I have said, gentlemen, that in these "Reflections" I look beyond the county of Norfolk. You will see the necessity of this enlarged view. You will perceive that, in times and under circumstances like the present, our duty extends itself to every county and to every parliamentary representative. All are equally liable to be deluded by reforming candidates, and to have their happiness blighted by the revolutionary doctrines which, whether with or without design, they may broach among them. Every elector is, of course, equally concerned to oppose such candidates, when he perceives the tendency of their course, and, root and branch, to tear up the very foundations of such conspiracies against his peace. I address you, therefore, not so much upon particular as upon general grounds; and, upon such grounds, all that I have to advance will be most usefully said, and will most intimately engage your feelings. Still from particular grounds is it that we draw general observations. It is from the proceedings of our own city and county that we are enabled to judge of the issue of such

* See the Norfolk Chronicle of June 27, 1818, and the Norwich Mercury of the same date.

proceedings taken in the gross. Though, therefore, I shall, in the outset of this letter, bespeak your attention to the individual business of the 23d of June, 1818, which concerned ourselves alone, yet the application of that business, as connected with what was and is going forward in other places, you will find to concern all. Further, what is known by the designation of the blue and white party in the city, I shall venture to assimilate with Mr. Coke's party in the county; for though there may be shades of difference in their religious, and even in their political notions, as in the world of republicanism, like that of heathenism, "there be gods many and lords many," there is still abundantly enough in common between them to convince us of the family likeness, and to perpetuate the family deformity. I wish this Letter, indeed, to be considered as, in some measure, an APPENDIX to my former "LETTER TO MR. COKE;"* as built upon the same foundations, somewhat extended it may be and strengthened; as written with the same views; as censuring and excusing that gentleman and his more respectable partizans in the same spirit; as conceding to them the same absence of evil intention, but as charging them with the same full and perfect presence of most destructive tendency in the opinions which they entertain, and the conduct which they

* I wish it to be particularly so considered, in respect of that comparison between the state of the public mind in France, previous to the revolution, and in England at present, which I there declined insisting upon.—(Letter to T. W. Coke, Esq. p. 39.—In respect too of dissent being at the root of our political disaffections; of the absurdity and danger of appealing to the majesty of the people; of the alarming spread and terrible nature of republican principles; of the delusions every where practised to weaken our regard for established government; and of the preparation of the public mind for expecting revolution, even while we are taught to believe that the country is in no peril from the prevailing temper and spirit of the times.

pursue. And I beg, wherever I may seem to forget, or not properly to allow for such acknowledgments in their favour, that I may not be deemed designedly to have omitted them. Mr. Coke's is, however, I am sorry to add, becoming a sweeping feculent party in the county; and so far as it may be found leagued with, and supported by hot and revolutionary spirits, here or elsewhere, any body may make exceptions in favour of such disgraceful coadjutors for me.

At the same time it is no wish of mine to saddle upon a man opinions which he professes not to hold, or to assign to him (his acts, and deeds, and general deportment, not gain saying) motives which he solemnly disclaims. Where there is any fair ground for doubt, I desire he may have the full benefit of a presumed integrity, and not be reckoned among the decidedly disaffected, or treated as such. Still human motives, in the affairs of human life, are proper objects of examination and judgment. Of those who blame us for such examination, and for deducing from thence an apology for our censures, we ask, how are government and civilized society to be conducted without such precaution? We judge with lenity of our fellow creatures as long as we can, because it is virtuous so to do, because it is politic, because it charitably accordeth with the frailty of our common nature. And where no harm results to ourselves, or to the community from our silence, we have no wish to bring any man's motives into doubt or discussion. But when the public, or our own individual good is likely to be injured by the line of conduct, religious or political, which our fellow creatures may think proper to pursue, then it becomes a duty to endeavour to ascertain on what foundations such conduct is built, what it is that leads them to adopt it, and to what points, in all likelihood, it is advancing. We have a right, where the necessity presses upon us, to infer intentions from actions. Actions repeatedly

tending to a certain object must convince us of the probability of that object being in view. If every topic of discussion and declamation, every declared opinion, every open deed, combining with time, place, and circumstances, all tend, and do, in fact, go to establish revolution in a state; we may too assuredly rest in the conclusion that revolution is the object. If this were not so, we should do wrong so to look upon it; for evermore the policy is, in the affairs of empire, as well as in domestic concernments, to hold men upright; so to hold them even against large appearance to the contrary, even against the knowledge that in their full and natural measure they are not so. We must keep up a sense of shame and a principle of honor in the human character as long as we can, for never was virtue of so assured a stamp as long to survive their departure.

Of the present opposers of government, the present disturbers of the peace of the realm, part are men who are themselves misled; who are weak in their apprehensions, and who may probably mean well; who at any rate have no bad designs; part are vain, sacrificing to a foolish ambition and popularity, and, with narrow views and selfish motives, doing an infinitude of harm wherever they have voice and influence; part (and they make up no small proportion, I fear, of the whole) are subtle and insinuating, are lost and abandoned, and desperate, and do seriously intend the overthrow of every thing. To the latter description of our adversaries alone it is that I confine my condemnation of both conduct and motive. For harsh and hardened natures like theirs, who are working the ruin of the state, and who know that they are working it, no condemnations can be too severe. These are the men who make no secret of their hostile views, and who even dare our vengeance; men who are ready to go all lengths, under pretence of advocating the popular cause, and who are prepared to

stop at that point only where death and destruction meet them or us. To such we owe no delicacy, no charity.—They are the objects I must be understood as, in these Reflections, having ever in view.—Those less guilty, those erroneously and weakly, and even ambitiously offending, we pity, gentlemen, while we strike; we soften down our enmities while we guard against and deplore theirs. Still enmities against such adversaries we must entertain. There may, indeed, be many Brutus's among them of "general honest thought," but they are no less conspirators against the general peace, and must be dealt by with, perhaps, harder measure than, under more favorable circumstances, would fall to their lot. For where the effect is so much to be deplored, we can make less distinction in our reprobation of the cause, and in the weight of our censure. They who countenance evil opinions, and connect themselves with evil company, must be content to be evil thought of and intreated. Society can secure itself on no other terms.

I make the foregoing concessions in favor of all who may be found deserving of the benefit of them. It is indeed prudent so to do, but it should not be prudent if I did not think it were just. For every opinion and every condemnation contained in the following pages, I am myself alone responsible. I suffer no man, in matters, of this nature, to suggest to me what I should say, or what I should leave unsaid; how far I should proceed, or, with the *nimum nec laudare, nec lœdere* whispered in mine ear, at what cautious, wary point of censure I ought to stop. I am told that my severity towards Mr. Coke in a former letter did displease several even of my own party. The honourable and friendly quarter from whence I received this information, precludes every suspicion of the fact. I have only, therefore, to observe, that *when I write to please any party*, it will be time enough to regret that I should so have offended.

There is always remedy and consolation where our censures are not deserved ; and where they are, the better way will be to undermine their influence, by cutting away the ground on which they rest. I disclaim attachment to any set of men or measures, endeavouring at the best exercise of my judgment on the common topics of investigation that lie equally before us all. For the course I may take in such an exercise there may be much to censure and somewhat perhaps to pardon. Every mind is not gifted with the same correctness or intensity of thought, the same calm equitable discernment of truth and good. There will be dissonance of opinion as to where opposition against the adversaries of government should begin, and to what degree it should be carried. The awful changes that are now pervading the world, are not exposed alike to every vision ; do not alike impress themselves upon all to whom they are exposed. Some discover the hidden seeds of disorganization with a clearer, some with a duller apprehension ; some speak of them with a more, some with a less enthusiastic warmth ; and few see and judge of them either as they really are, or as they may eventually turn out. Were I a party man, in the abused sense of the word, I should chalk me out a very different course of conduct from my present. I should be careful whom I offended, that might do service to that party. I should attack no man, nor any set of men, the possibility of whose votes for a ministerial candidate could, at any future election, be at all calculated upon. I should suffer the dissenters to go on in their own crafty way. I should let the evangelical clergy play their pious pranks at their leisure. I should not “ even whisper to the idle air ” a syllable on the subject of tithes or tithe payers. All these causes of irritation I should carefully keep in the back ground. But I have no eye upon any main chance of this nature ; no party feelings of this reserved complexion in my composi-

tion; and though I wish well to the cause of Mr. Wodehouse, and would willingly second and serve it, that cause shall receive no support from me separated, in any instance, from such a regard to what passeth in my mind for equity and the true national interest, as ought to be held sacred. Where there is offence let "the great axe fall," whether it be on the head of friend or foe. My wishes go not beyond the serving a good and lawful cause in a good and lawful manner. And this, with God's leave, I will do without fear, and as well and as far as I am able. All the disgrace attendant upon my principles and conduct is my own, and, if there be any thing in the shape of credit incidentally connected with them, all that credit is my own likewise.

Though I profess but imperfectly to treat upon so voluminous a subject as the present spirit of the times, and the consequent line of duty to which such a spirit obliges us; yet, as this Letter will run out pretty much at length, it may be necessary to premise, that, in the division of its somewhat desultory line of discussion, I have respect chiefly to these three circumstances—*FIRST, the mere local politics of the county of Norfolk, and which I shall endeavour to dispatch as expeditiously as I can. SECONDLY, the danger of our constitution, ecclesiastical and civil, from the prevailing evil spirit that has long been growing up, and is now gone forth with great might; and THIRDLY, our imperative duty in such an alarming, and, I will venture to add, unparalleled crisis of affairs.* This is the only division I dare venture to appropriate to a subject which, I fear, it will be found I have by no means treated in so connected a manner as I ought. However something of use I may have effected; and where difficulties abound, as in a discussion of this nature, the reader must be considerate.

As to my authorities, I have not been very lavish.

of or solicitous about them, as little, I think, will be found that does not lie open to our common observation and fall in with our common feelings. I have drawn my conclusions, gentlemen, in good measure, from that useful evidence upon evidence, accumulating from age to age and up to the present hour, that is before you, and me, and all of us. For the history of dissent in this country, I know not that I can plead better authorities than the works of Jewel, and Hooker, and Stillingfleet, and more lately of cotemporary writers whom it is unnecessary to name, altogether forming against her sectarian adversaries "a wall of fire" around our established and calumniated church. The political history of the day, as delivered down in our periodical records, our newspaper reports of parliamentary debates, &c.* our voluminous anniversary and electioneering speeches, with the infinite discussions on religious topics that are continually issuing from the press, cannot fail of supplying every man with sufficient demonstration of the spirit of the times. These, aided by what I see, and hear, and turn and examine on all sides, and endeavour, as far as I am able, to digest and apply, have furnished me, at once, with much food and much authority for my Reflections. But, above all, history, and especially

* I take the sentiments of our Whigs, our Reformers, and others, whether in or out of parliament, from the speeches purported to have been delivered by them in the several periodical newspapers and publications of the day. For the accuracy of these reports I cannot answer. Where they are incorrect, my reflections, so far as they may be fairly deemed to flow from them, must be considered as withdrawn; but if they are given to the public correctly, I withdraw nothing. In the *Norwich Mercury* and the *Norfolk Chronicle* much of Mr. Coke's party asperity is softened down, much of the weakness of his votaries wisdomed over, and even the republican fires are occasionally so allayed as to burn dim and harmless. These county records, however, are not without their virtues.

the more ancient, is, and must be the most valuable store-house for practical deduction; for there we see human hopes and fears, desires and endeavors, which constitute human experience, embodied. There we view, at once, the effects of peculiar laws, and institutions, and forms of government, under every variation of circumstance; and from thence, with allowance for difference in times, and tempers, and local situations, we discover from what has happened, what, in all likelihood, under any thing approaching to a similarity of condition, will happen; nothing so far altering man's nature, and feelings, and passions, but that "the thing which hath been" is nearly of necessity "that which shall be."

Thus much by way of introduction. Now, gentlemen, let us proceed to business. I will endeavour to clear the way as I go by removing, in the first place, what may not unaptly be termed the rubbish of the late county and city proceedings, which might otherwise lie sweating, and soaking, and obstructing our progress at every turn. Let us begin by referring to the "meeting of notables," convened at the White Swan on Saturday, June 20th, "to consider the propriety of putting in nomination, on Tuesday next, a person who will more truly represent the interests and opinions of the county, and more effectually protect the liberties of the people of England, than we conceive to have been done during the last session of parliament by our late member, Edmond Wodehouse, Esq.,"* These "notes of preparation," struck off blazing hot in the moment, as was conceived, of profound peace, had symptoms about them of no ordinary suspicion. More names, it seems, were appended to this state instrument than lent their hands to the signing of it. Indeed, one gentleman

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 20th, 1818.

comes forward and declares, in the public papers, that his signature thereto was nothing less than a forgery.* Others, I understand, made somewhat

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818. There is reason to believe that these forgeries amounted to nearly half the number of the names. But the following documents will better explain the nature of these transactions than any thing I can advance. "Call, Sir, upon our modern reformers to explain to the public, the White Swan forgery, when, out of twenty-two names signed to a requisition, that had for its object to make the yeomanry (or rather our city jacobins) dictate to the gentry of the county, half of them at *least* were forged! A country attorney, and electioneering agent of the great man of the county, was the agent in this business; and one of our city delegates, *who*, having organized our Hampden and Union clubs, had a mind to try his hand upon the county, acted as the secretary. As the affair has been traced thus far, perhaps the *honorable* secretary will deem it *necessary* to inform the public from whom he received these names.

If, Sir, you would give us a regular history of the proceedings of our Norwich reformers for the last two or three years—of their *other* forgeries and deceptions—their organized system of *falsehood* and misrepresentation, with all the various arts of terror and cajolment by which they have endeavoured to mislead the ignorant, you would do the nation, as well as our city, an essential service, by opening their eyes to what they may expect from *similar* exertions of their brother *reformers* upon a larger scale."—"During the late contest for this city, much was said about forging names. I should hope, by a reference to Messrs. Pike and Everitt's advertisements,* in the Norwich papers of this day, you will be convinced who it is that take upon themselves to forge names. One of the most active who actually signed, and no doubt wrote the requisition for a meeting at the Swan, is a certain delegate orator," &c. These productions, the former of which is a very able one, evidently come from different quarters, and are both anonymous. At any rate, however, they serve to prove, the only end I have in view in thus quoting them, the suspicious entertained of this celebrated delegate. Another forgery was practised during Mr. Harbord's contest for the city. The hand-bill issued on that occasion will sufficiently explain its nature. "Mr. Harbord's committee hasten to inform the public, that, in consequence of a hand-bill issued by the committee of Messrs. Smith and Gurney, a deputation has been sent

* Nine other gentlemen (of the 22) have made a similar declaration.

similar declarations. As to Mr. Coke, he knew no more of this mysterious transaction, this "fortuitous concourse of atoms," than the man in the moon; and even the gentleman himself unanimously pitched upon by this "most respectable body of yeomanry," seems at a loss to determine from what precise quarter the call comes, or whether, in fact, any body called or no. In short, not one of the party were in a hurry to acknowledge the legitimacy of a proceeding on the result of which the dictatorial succession to the county crown so eminently depended. Gentlemen, in olden times, when Jupiter, the great god of the heathens, had no better game in view, he used occasionally, we are told, to take it into his head to impregnate the air. Somebody was therefore presently born, nobody knew how. Perhaps our worthy White Swan senators may have worked away somewhat after the same imperial fashion; for here was their *terræfilii* brought into existence, and actually staring you full in the face, without parent, or relative, or genealogy, or a single friend of any description on which to father the unlucky brat. Amid the whole listening waste, all was upon the dead scent. Not an archive of ancestry was to be met with, and even the gales of Holkham swept, in appearance, over the deserted political orphan, with no fragrance on their wings. Will Mr. Edward Taylor, who, as is reported, acted as *accoucheur* on this trying occasion, be kind enough to come forward and tell us the secrets of its birth.

Whether, however, the bantling was begotten on that miscreated abortion, "the blue devils," or sprung

to inspect a letter, signed, Thomas Back, at the request of Lord Suffield. An inspection of the letter alluded to, enables Mr. Harbord's committee to declare, that the signature and postscript, in which Lord Suffield's name is mentioned, are palpable and impudent forgeries."

from the head of Jove himself, or was manufactured into being by the skill of the delegate, or found its way into our wicked political world through any worthier instrumentality, must be left, I suspect, to posterity to decipher. In the mean while, let us examine a bit into the nature and qualifications of the candidate thus strongly brought forward, and at a season when certainly nobody expected and few were prepared to receive him. Gentlemen, the city of Norwich, which contains many good men and things, boasts one character of a somewhat singular complexion. They are every morning treated with the tones of a certain worthy personage, bawling out, "old brass, old copper, old shoes, old clothes, old rags; bring 'em all out—and here's your ready money." This valuable member of society makes his peregrinations day by day, and, by means of the enchantment at the end of his invitation, generally succeeds, at the close of his labours, in bagging up a tolerable quantity of the precious commodities. But MR. PHILIP HAMOND, the late half-fledged candidate for the county, had not a spark of the honest ragman's spirit about him. He was for their bringing out their votes, and their interest, and their support, and their good will, and their Whig doings and dealings of all sorts, (those political old rags that will now scarce hang together and cover their nakedness); but not a syllable, thank you, of "here's your ready money." No, no—they were, it seems, to "bring 'em all out," and find the ready money into the bargain. His promises went no further than, after that they were brought out, to do them the especial favour of accepting "the precious commodities." Hear his gracious declaration. "Highly as I am flattered by this mark of your esteem, I also feel that I have only a common interest with you all in the event of an election; and I therefore think it right most distinctly to state, that if I am elected, it must be by the independent exertions of the free-

holders. I shall spend no money in the contest, but shall rely for support entirely upon your own efforts.”*

Now is it likely that such a man should have succeeded in such a contest as must inevitably have awaited him? For what does this high consideration amount to, but a disposition on his part to be sent to the parliament house, provided his constituents would elect, convey him thither, bring him back, put a promissory note into his pocket for incidental expences, and clothe, feed, and entertain him by the way. What a head was here to think of setting the Whig crown of “the first county in England” upon!

“If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me
Without my stir,”†

may sound very well from the lips of an ambitious spirit who has qualms of conscience at becoming a traitor, but is a mighty wishy washy sort of declaration for one who aspired to the enviable distinction of becoming the colleague of that unspotted Whig statesman, T.W. Coke, Esq. “England’s hope and Norfolk’s pride,” in whose heart, as Mr. Southwell assures us, “is no guile,”‡ positively no guile, religious, moral, or political! The road to fame was certainly open, but it was a rough road, the virtues of Mr. Wodehouse having strewn it with thorns, instead of roses, to any competitor. Indeed, had the dictatorial influence been fixed deep enough; had its *sic volo* pervaded, as it once did, every park and homestall throughout the county, it would have little signified what Whig candidate might have put in for the stakes, whether Mr. Hamond, or Admiral Lukin, or Mr. Lombe, or even the very make-weights of the party. They would probably, any of them, have walked over the course at their leisure, with the conge

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

† Macbeth.

‡ Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

d'elire pinned up in their pockets and the new song set to the old tune, "Here is my man, one Roger P—tt." But, Providence be praised, the wind has, at length, happily shifted its quarter. The cutting north-east is now qualified by the milder breezes of the south-west.

A characteristic "address to the Norfolk freeholders,"* followed close upon the declaration of the White Swan senate; a sort of crazy composition that the public could hardly tell what to make of, or whether its materials were of a "radical reform" or ultra complexion. However, come from what quarter it might, the matter was not without its meaning or its merit. It shewed us Mr. Coke's *Whig* party in a somewhat new light. It told us what sort of allies he had to second him—what sort of advisers he was leagued with—and what sort of adversaries we are ourselves opposed to. It convinced us, judging from the restrained spirit which pervaded the composition, that "bee-hive banners," and the "tree of liberty," and "the flag-staff surmounted with the figure of a bonnet rouge," might not for ever remain the useless lumber they have been; but that the true blues of the Hampden school, under the tutorage of Socinus and the tabernacle, discovering their hidden virtues, might possibly, at no very distant period, feel a call for their exertion.

The farce of the *White Swan Senate* however, gentlemen, very indifferently got up and still worse performed, was soon over, nor is it now worth our while too curiously to enquire how far Mr. Coke was or was not concerned in the *pantomimic heroic extravaganza*, or whether Mr. Philip Hamond was to have been brought in by the majesty of the people,

* This address the reader will find in the *Norwich Mercury* of June 20, 1818.

or the nod of the dictator. We will conclude—for it will be the shortest way, I believe, of settling a complicated affair, to cut the gordian knot at once—that Thomas William Coke, Esq. did truly and bona fide “*stand alone*” upon this memorable occasion—that the meeting at the Swan was without his knowledge—the starting a candidate in opposition to Mr. Wodehouse without his knowledge—the sending over an ambassador extraordinary to the court of Westacre without his knowledge—the result of that embassy in Mr. Hamond’s rejection of the overtures without his knowledge—and, to crown the comedy of *ignoramus* throughout, the change in Mr. Hamond’s mind and his final acceptance of the gracious invitation without his knowledge. We will believe that, in all these diplomatic doings, Mr. Coke was as “pure as the unsunned snow.” It is a concession we can afford to his comfort and dignity without any deterioration of our own, requesting in return nothing more than that, for the future, as was ingeniously suggested, “all horses intending to start for the county plate will give at least three days’ notice to the clerk of the course, with the weight they carry, and the names and colours of the riders.”*

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci. We must throw our picture, gentlemen, into lights and shades. In addressing the great body of the Norfolk freeholders on a subject of comparatively so inferior importance, I feel myself in the situation of a manager who has pit, gallery, and boxes to please at the same instant, and *hic labor, hoc opus est*, by nearly the same means. With this view, and preparatory to the remarks which follow, suffer me to draw your attention to the Hampden leaders, of the collected multitudes of the 23d of June, (the day of elec-

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27.

tion) at the Shirehall, Norwich. Homer, you know, has given us a learned catalogue of his heroes assembled in arms for the destruction of Troy. Milton too has no less learnedly, and with equal genius, described his fallen angels after their expulsion from heaven. Though no poet myself, I will yet, under pardon, just touch upon the edge of the same liberty, by introducing to your acquaintance two or three (sufficient for a sample) of the long line of unparalleled worthies, "the choice and master spirits of the age," to whom we have the misfortune to be opposed on almost every occasion that demands the exercise of common sense.

To this goodly scene of contention, then came the whole illustrious tribe of what, if we were indulged in any mere earthly expression, we might be apt, perhaps, to designate, for want of a better term, whig reformers upon the radical, I had almost said, the revolutionary scale. First, and in a mental trim that perfectly bespoke his consciousness of the subjection of his followers, appeared the *dictatorial leader* of this motly crew—the great heathen divinity, to whose worship temples were every where dedicated, and from whose altars the smoke of sacrifices daily ascended, with a lowering countenance, a scornful brow, and a dark uneasy mind. Still was it clearly perceptible that

his form had not yet lost

All her original brightness, nor appeared

Less than archangel ruined.*

He was followed by one, inferior in dignity and haughtiness, for the purpose of nominating their mighty chief, which he did in a speech replete with eulogies that had this peculiar feature of convenience about them, to suit, with a little cutting and pruning, any of the race of the Pisistratidæ that might offer himself

for the sovereign honour. Next to him appeared a certain god of the ocean, forgetful, alas ! of a more natural allegiance elsewhere, to second this nomination, and (the old brazen nose triton being cast, I suppose, upon the strand, or his trumpet somehow or other out of tune,) to sound the praises of his idol, and to feel how the popular pulse reverberated to it. Lower down you might discover, half lost in a cloud of sulphur, a spirit of a far darker complexion, sorely grieved that Archimedes could furnish him with no foothold to storm Olympus, and to trample " thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers," in the dust. On the heels of this chiron to the young Hampdens of the county, and apparently in his train, was perceived a divinity, of a benignant countenance, but of sufficiently perverse habits, who, with his preparations piping hot about him, was for setting the Styx on fire, and blowing up my Lord Castlereagh and the Scotch boroughs in the air, though, as it unluckily turned out, there was not a single spark stirring at which he could light his match. And there, to clinch this gathering together of immaculate natures, were to be seen what, in our lower world, we should call the " great seraphic lords," of the common council and corporation, a set of as " majestic forms impatient to be free," as ever blessed the eye of wonder, the cream and flower of the *blue and white* regions of the empyreum.

All these and more came flocking ; but with looks
Down cast and damp ; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their *Chief*
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself.*

Gentlemen, I pass over extraneous matter, such as
cavalcading and contriving, and parties thrown out

and parties squeezed in, and too many of one sort and too few of another, and come at once to the meeting itself. And here I feel it necessary to deliver my opinion, in brief general terms, on Mr. Coke's speech and conduct upon that occasion, for so long was that speech and so strange that conduct, as to usurp, by far, the best portion of the business of the day. I have no notion of mincing a matter, but will call things by their right names. I say, then, that I do not recollect any instance of a whole county being insulted by such a jumble of political slanders and absurdities as that gentleman was then and there pleased to pour forth. Had others been of my mind he would not have been heard half through his disgusting details. Indeed, with any degree of patience, he was not heard half through them. The constant, violent interruptions he experienced, proved how offensive were the sentiments he delivered, how revolting the conclusions he drew to the far greater part of the freholders assembled. How Mr. Coke could, in the face of such opposition, continue such a speech, of which the County Chronicle and Mercury reports are a mere skeleton; how he could brave out such scorn and resentment as were manifested; how he could volunteer such a farago of inanities before men of sense, such a string of calumnies before men of respectability, such a list of stale, worn-out, fifty times refuted positions before men of far greater constitutional information than himself, is to me astonishing. But so it was.—To the silent contempt of many, and the loud reproaches of more, he opposed an ineffable disdain, and, keeping on in his career of political ribaldry, set shame and all the sober virtues at defiance.

So little aware, however, does Mr. Coke seem to have been of any impropriety of conduct upon this occasion, that he even invites inquiry and dares accusation. "I address myself (says he) to all parties—

friends and foes, (political foes of course I mean, for I trust I have no others) Whigs and Tories—to all who now hear me—and I challenge—nay even would goad any man present, if he have any dislike to my political conduct, to come forward and avow what it is.”* Alas! what is this but the desperation of the poor stag at bay, a ridiculous braving of the public to come forward and convict a man, for the twentieth time, who has already been convicted and condemned nineteen. But the challenge is vain, and vain would be its acceptance; for if Mr Coke never “makes his bow and retires”* until his political delinquency be proved to his own satisfaction, the *sine qua non*, I presume, of the defiance, he must retain his “situation of honour”† long after that situation is tired and disgusted with him. “The king may make a peer, but he cannot make a county member.”† The observation is correct, and equally correct would it be were we to add, the freeholders may make a representative, but they can neither send him to the House of Commons with a sound judgment, nor with humility to supply the lack of it; they can neither teach him compassion for himself, nor respect for his constituents; they can neither, if he be weak, guard him against error, nor, if he be stubborn, protect him against disgrace. They can only send him forth their accredited agent as they find him—good for any thing, if their luck so be, or, if such be their misfortune, good for nothing.

I am at issue with Mr. Coke upon every part of his political conduct. I do not think there exists, at this moment, an unfitter representative for the county of Norfolk than himself. I do not think the kingdom

* Mr. Coke's speech of the 23d June, 1818.—See the Norfolk Chronicle of June 27; consult the Norwich Mercury too of the same date.

† Norfolk Chronicle, June 27.

has more injurious adversaries, whatever may be their rectitude of intention, than he and his party at the present crisis. Under this impression, and I suspect I am not singular herein, I shall endeavour as I proceed to give a tongue to those bold surmizes which our adversaries have indulged in ; and as Mr. Coke at Norwich, and his co-patriots in other places, have been strong in their appeals to the feelings of the late assembled multitudes, I will strive to place those appeals in such a light as that these gentlemen may see whom they are hereafter to expect among the number of their friends, and whom they must be content for ever to consider as their firm and determined enemies. Their civic addresses, and my reflections upon them, will each have their little day, will each be patronized, or denounced by their respective advocates, and then, covered with laurels and with dirt, sink together into the grave of one common oblivion.

Let us, in the first place, advert to some minor points of consideration ; minor, in respect to those more leading features that concern the kingdom at large, but still not altogether without importance so far as the representation of the county of Norfolk is considered. Mr. Coke, gentlemen, tells us, and he takes a pride in announcing it, that during his long course of parliamentary service he has kept himself perfectly clear of the least obligation to ministers. "I call," says he, "upon any man in this court to charge me, if he can, with having ever solicited a single favour from government. It is true, that my situation in life places me above the necessity of taking such a step on my own behalf ; but I, like many others, have many poor dependants ; yet I never have asked a single favour, so help me God."* On his honourable word we are bound to, and, with

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

certain qualifications, we do believe him herein.— But what does this declaration amount to? What signifies it to the dignity or interest of the county whether Mr. Coke has, or has not asked favors of a reigning ministry, whether he has or has not put a crown on the head of Pompey's statue? A favor, as he justly intimates, personally conferred on one in his exalted station, would be as a new shame added to the old political score, though as to his "poor dependents," especially certain of his clerical hangers on, they would, I dare say, have quite as high an opinion of his political wisdom, aye, and of his political virtue too, were he to abate a bit of being so plagu'y squeamish on this said ground of ministerial independence. If a good fat preferment did but now and then arrive, they would never, I suspect, trouble their heads to ask by what wind it found its way to Holkham, or whether it met with any saucy rebuffs in working up its passage. My Lord Castlereagh may be a very great idiot in the diplomatic affairs of Europe, as Mr. Coke's *fidus Achates* has frequently assured us; but still, could he only manage to clap a mitre on the head of that self-sufficient gentleman, or even merely mark him off for the next vacant deanery, I doubt not that we should find him presently metamorphosed into as wise, and great, and honourable a statesman as ever blessed the British soil. Of his *discernment*, in so especial a selection, none could entertain a suspicion, save those who are so incorrigibly stupid as to behold the Earl of Buckingham's chaplain, and not to confess a fac-simile of every earthly virtue, and the very personification of humility itself.

Mr. Coke, however, with his present predilections about them, is not likely to save my Lord Castlereagh's credit by committing himself on the score of any such obligations. There is too much of a wayward stubbornness in his composition, the natural con-

commitant of pride, to suffer him to see either men or things in a true light. His doctrine upon this head I will venture a protest against. I know not that it necessarily follows that "we must bow to those who grant us favours."* In point of gratitude the heart should be ever ready to bow for all favours; but that any favours should warp our minds, should distract our judgment, should change our sentiments, should divert us from that independence of soul which every man may preserve if he please, and without which no man can continue an object of respect, is what I am loath to believe, and should be unwilling to find. Are there no kindnesses conferred upon men for past deserts? Are they all obtained under the secret understanding that they are intended as remunerations for present, or as temptations to future delinquency? "What would have become of my independence had I asked for a *prebend*, or any great place in this county?"* This coarse, common place, incorrect allusion, gentlemen, disgraces Mr. Coke without serving his cause; disgraces him more than I am willing to say. It indeed almost breaks in upon the sacredness of his private character. With an example before him, in Mr. Wodehouse's family, of the utmost delicacy and dignity, where was his apology for this miserable lack of all dignity and delicacy? What a pity it is that he cannot keep his political littleness of soul to himself, but that it must bolt out upon all occasions, and, after overwhelming every courtesy in its career, return lost, dispirited, discomforted into his own bosom. His declaration that he was "a plain man, and should speak in a plain manner,"* and that he meant "nothing offensive to any individual whatever,"* wishing to preserve inviolate my respect for his domestic repute, I refrain to venture any remarks upon.

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

May it not possibly have been on some preconceived notion of this kind, that "we must bow to those who grant us favours," that Mr. Coke on the day of election seemed, in some measure, indecisive whether he should even ask the favor of the freeholders of Norfolk to return him for their representative! If this were not the case, he must have some happy art that we are unacquainted with, of reconciling what, to common ears and common understandings, did certainly very much put on the appearance of contradiction. In one part of his speech he declares, "and when I reflect on the character of the freeholders of Norfolk, it becomes the proudest wish of my heart to live and die the representative of so respectable a body of yeomen."* But forgetting, as it should seem, this balmy reflection as he journeys on in the higher flights of his eloquence, he afterwards assures us, "for many years my feelings, speaking with regard to myself personally, have been those of indifference as to whether I was in or out of parliament."* And as if this was not enough to puzzle all ordinary conception on so heterogeneous a subject, he presently adds, "Gentlemen, I come forward in your cause as a friend to liberty, and not from any wish of my own to continue in parliament; for if the freeholders felt themselves equal, without me, to call two Whigs to the representation of the county, nothing would make me more happy than to retire and return thanks for the honours which have so long been conferred on me."* And is this, we are here ready to ask, is this the devoted servant of "the first county in England," who has nothing so dear at his heart as not only to live, but "to *die* the representative of so respectable a body of yeomen!"*

Besides, if we must of necessity, as Mr. Coke lays it down, "bow to those who grant us favours," will not

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

he, in conformity with his own principle, expect those to whom he grants favours to bow to him? This is, I confess, so far as it concerns the subject of county representation, a somewhat awkward corollary from the preposition, but still, I think, fairly deducible. This will bind many of Mr. Coke's "*independent freeholders*" to the wheels of his triumphant chariot; and if, where a thousand obligations have been showered down by him, a thousand liberty caps are to be thrown up in the air for him, I do not wonder that despotic ideas should come across him, and the dictatorial feeling stamp itself upon his soul. Pardon me, gentlemen, if I presume to subjoin a few remarks on this said disputed feeling. They are such as lie plain before us, and that, giving the least symptom of meaning to words or deeds, will speak their own drift without commentary.

You must have perceived, both in the friends of Mr. Coke and in that gentleman himself, an anxiety to divert the public attention from an opinion pretty generally prevalent, that the Whig member for the county of Norfolk had, for a long time past, been the dictator of that county. With this view it was that his friend, Mr. Southwell, in proposing him as a fit representative, assured us, that "no man was so universally beloved as Mr. Coke"*—that the county of Norfolk owed its fame to the "splendid benevolence of Mr. Coke"*—and that "he came forward with the greatest confidence to propose to the choice of the freeholders the man whom they had tried for forty years—a steady patriot, whose votes had not cost them one shilling, nor one drop of blood—whose heart was free from guile, and who had steered, through good report and through evil report, the unflinching course of his duty to those who sent him to

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

parliament.”* Admiral Lukin followed close upon the same tack, and, in seconding the nomination, concluded with “a warm and energetic eulogium of Mr. Coke, characteristic of that honourable gentleman’s merits, as the patron of useful and industrious pursuits, the kind friend, the liberal landlord, and whose attention to the interests and improvement of agriculture had rendered Norfolk an object of emulation to the rest of the kingdom.”*

I will say nothing in disparagement of all this—I know nothing in disparagement of it. I desire to know nothing. His public conduct—his public political conduct is all that I feel it allowable to concern myself with. But here, alas! it is that we look for his domestic virtues in vain! Here, if he does bring with him “a guileless heart,” it is yet accompanied with a prodigious deal of fire upon his tongue, and with possibly as much political chicanery as “a head no hellabore can cure” will well furnish. Whatever may be Mr. Coke’s excellencies, it is certainly not one among the number of them to “keep his mouth as it were with a bridle.” No man may be “so universally beloved as Mr. Coke,” but that love ought never to have travelled beyond the sphere of his domestic attachments and pursuits. O that “his own choice” had been better followed!† How much of regret and of disgrace would it have saved both him and his friends, had it long e’er this “prompted him to retire to Holkham, and in the bosom of a happy family to have devoted the remainder of his life to the pursuits in which he delights!”† But the new vagary that

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

† These professions of an attachment to home pleasures are not new with Mr. Coke. I find he made them with as great a devotedness in the year 1802. “He was not intended by nature for public situations. He was much more happy in his domestic employments and agricultural pursuits.” (Norfolk Election and

has taken him, of throwing, if possible, the representation of the county into the hands of Whig members, (no matter what stock they spring from, whether Hampden or Hobhouse,) will disturb the peace of all parties, and probably in the end cover him and his advisers with ignominy. In vain are we told that Mr. Coke "is in perfect health both of mind and body."* The physicians have given us but half the bulletin—they should have added, "but his political insanity continues unimpaired." The gallant Admiral is represented as declaring "that he could talk on the delightful theme of Mr. Coke's virtues for an hour." This would have been boxing the compass a little out of season; but luckily Mr. Coke saved him the trouble by pre-occupying that "delightful theme" himself. We are sorry the Admiral should run upon shoals and quick sands of this hazardous nature, for there is an openness about him that induces us, while we condemn, to compassionate his alliance with the house of Holkham. He had better leave the display of Mr. Coke's virtues to his friend Glover, who, with brushes for all sorts of scouring, and colours for all sorts of characters, can get you up an election daub at twenty minutes' notice.

Mr. Coke would do well to sit down patiently under an imputation which he certainly will never, with his present propensities about him, be able to shake off. He has more claims to the title of a dictator than he is probably aware of, and many more than he

Scrutiny, p. 11.) Surely some evil planet must have the rule over his destiny, or a man, with a power so pre-eminent of doing as he pleases, would never thus please to continue to do what he dislikes. The enchanters we know had Don Quixotte constantly under finger and thumb; and it is possible they may have bottled up those wishes of Mr. Coke nearest to his heart by the same species of magic.—Would we could find some student of Alcala to dash the phial into a thousand pieces!

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

will ever be brought to acknowledge. His very acts of political courtesy are confirmations of his despotism. He himself merely excuses the intention of acting the dictator on the invitation of Mr. Hamond to become a candidate for the county. "Although there are gentlemen who, endeavouring to make their own cause appear as good, and ours as bad as possible, have called me dictator, yet I have had nothing to do with any plan of opposition on the present occasion."* Our own cause we certainly do endeavour to make appear as good as we can, and, in the midst of so much clamour and misrepresentation, such endeavours are needful. But it is, I conceive, a work of supererogation altogether, to endeavour to render their's worse than, in many respects, it is. To set before you the several instances in which Mr. Coke has evinced a spirit the most dictatorial, would be only to go over his past political life and conversation. Indeed he carries about with him the seal of his dictatorship in his air, his manner, his actions, his attitudes, in all that he setteth his hand unto, or his heart upon. Nay, we found that he actually could not address a county meeting, and at a moment when, petitioning for the public suffrage, a candidate has need of every crumb of courtesy about him, without constantly spreading forth the dictator's claw, and exhibiting the dictator's countenance. We shall not soon forget Mr. Coke's conduct upon the day of the late election, his indifference to the applauses by which, in conjunction with Mr. Wodehouse, (on the declaration of the High Sheriff of their due return) he was surrounded. While that gentleman was gratefully returning his acknowledgments to all around him, how was Mr. Coke employed? How was he employed indeed! Even his own constituents were not deemed

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

worthy the honour of being thanked by this despot for having reinstated him in his seat! Is this Mr. Coke's best mode of fixing the house of Holkham in the estimation of the county? Is this the legacy he leaves to those descendants who may be destined, we fear, to discredit the representation of that county when he is no more? He may well boast of his independence, if the freeholders of Norfolk can submit to a degradation like this. With such scorn and indifference to encounter, such insults to endure, such indignities to stand publicly exposed to, such glaring proofs of the estimation in which he holds his vassal tenantry, a fifteen hundred acre farm, with all Dr. Rigby's soothing medicaments attached to it, had truly need be a pretty tempting *bonus*.

We have indeed upon record, and we would willingly give him the benefit of it, were it any thing worth, one solitary intance of Mr. Coke's apparent urbanity, and that is, where he assures us he took the trouble of coming from London "to pay his respects to the Mayor of Norwich, on the guild day."* But had this Mayor of Norwich been, as I understand he ought to have been, of the purple and orange party, he would probably not have gone over the threshold of his door to pay him his respects. Nor do I think that even a blue and white magistrate would have stood much chance of a condescension so pre-eminent, had not "Mr. Smith's popular and triumphant election," and the hopeful expectancies appendant thereunto, (as vultures are known to follow the smell of the carcase) appeared as the guiding star at the end of the vista.†

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

† At the celebrated political Dereham dinner, in the summer of 1817, Mr. Coke is represented by the Editor of the Bury Post, as alluding to the Deputy Mayor of Norwich, in these words:—"a man of the name of Hankses," &c. So little pains did he then take

The Whig member for the county not a dictator! I will not believe it—it would be a contradiction to the evidence of sense if I did, knowing that every thing politically, and even some things agriculturally done by this celebrated disturber of the peace, is done dictatorially. Mr. Coke is made up of inconsistency. He cannot, forsooth, bear the least act of arbitrary power in the *imperium*, yet who more arbitrary in the *imperio in imperium*. He cannot away with the least abridgement of the people's rational liberties and comforts, yet who less indulgent to those liberties when they entrench upon his own peculiar enjoyments? I have now before me a document of some value upon this point, purporting to be a circular of Thomas William Coke, Esq. to what I should call, judging from the peculiarity of its style, and the nature of its contents, the bondmen of Egypt. And because it may throw some light on this said doubtful subject of dictatorship, and may afford wholesome instruction to future high spirited applicants for Mr. Coke's favour, I subjoin it below, copied verbatim et literatim, as delivered into my hands, with permission to make what use of it I think proper. I have reason to believe, from the assurances given me, that its correctness may be depended upon.*

to evince the least symptom of courtesy towards one who had, but a while before, relinquished the office of *chief magistrate* of the city! Mr. Coke's courtesies are not intended as presents—they are, it seems, a vendible commodity, and must be bought.

* Copy of Mr. Coke's Circular Letter.

“Holkham, February 10th, 1818.

“SIR—I am directed by Thos. Wm. Coke, Esq. to address a copy of this *Circular* letter to you, the meaning and purport of which is, to endeavour to prevent any misunderstanding from arising relative to the game upon the farm which you rent and hold under Mr. Coke, and the following particulars may be considered as a rule for your guidance in future, in respect to the game upon your farm.

“You have Mr. Coke's free permission to dig out, stop out, and

And is this, freeholders of Norfolk, is this the man who would reform parliament, and beat down habeas corpus restraints, and do away the gagging bill, and have the people free, and the press free, and religion free, and agriculture free, (of *tithes*) and two

destroy all the rabbits you may find in your hedge-row, banks, or other such places upon your farm, but you are not to disturb the adjoining woods, preserves, and covers; and it is expected you will make the banks up in a proper manner, after digging the rabbits out.

"You also have Mr. Coke's permission to course hares upon your farm, at such times as you may think proper, between the dates of the first day of November and the first day of March, in each year.

"But it is expected you will sport fair; that you will run thorough-bred greyhounds *only*, and not more than one brace of dogs at a time after one hare.

"You are requested to preserve pheasants and partridges, as much as possible, upon your farm; consequently, that you bush your stubbles after harvest. That you do not disturb your hedge-rows in the spring months and breeding season; but, as the breeding season may be expected to be over by the fourteenth day July, it is requested, that as soon as possible after that date in each year, you will cut down all the weeds in and about your hedge-row, banks, and wastes upon your farm, and that you will dig out and destroy all the rabbits you may find thereon.

"It is also requested, that you will give your corn weeders and mowers strict charge to preserve all pheasants, and partridge nests and eggs, also young hares; to the true intent and meaning of this notice, that a fair proportion of game may be preserved upon Mr. Coke's estates, but not to encourage the encrease of rabbits, so as injure the tenants and occupiers of the estate.

"With best respects,

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble Servant,

"**FRANCIS BLAIKIE,**

"Steward and Agent."

Though I am not inclined to think this circular altogether so dictatorial as some do, yet is it far too much so for a man that, on all occasions, is foremost in advocating the liberties of the people, and that lately in the house of commons took the part he did on the discussion of the game laws, and so severely alluded to his neighbours. His speech and his circular will do better apart than together.

Whig members of the same free principles for the county, and all free, and happy, and comfortable, and masters of their own fields and fire-sides about him? Seriously, if the term dictator be not applicable to Thomas William Coke, Esq. M. P. for the county of Norfolk, I know not to whom it ever was, or will be so. It was in his nature, he intimates, to be grateful to his friends. True—but in the very front of this graciousness, let any man please him ninety-nine times, and, if he wishes a continuance of his favours, displease him the hundredth if he dare. To serve Mr. Coke is the work, I suspect, of little less than a whole life, and woe to any citizen of Cizicus who neglects the worship of the deified Augustus. Falling short of the pander of his politics and the villēin of his soil, he may soon, alas! be destined to behold around him congregating clouds, coming storms, and flat and blasted harvests!

With a word or two on Mr. Coke's stale politics, which he has brought to our Norwich market so often, that nobody cares to purchase them at any price, and we shall have nearly cast out the extraneous matter of the county meeting. You perceived, gentlemen, how on that occasion, with a view of demonstrating his perfect political consistency, he thought it necessary to treat us with a history of his past political life. How he began and how he ended this valuable bit of biography, I need not say. You all heard it, and were able to appreciate its merit. Abstractedly indeed, considered, his delineations had little in them to cause much alarm. The dull, dozing things had been heard a hundred times over. There is a sort of unbending wrong-headedness about this great man that defies alike reproof or reformation. He is what his own imperative feelings have made, and what they will probably leave him. Again this merciless assassin of departed virtue falls foul upon the memory of Mr. Pitt, "that *hell-born* minister

whom, it seems, he once avowed a determination to oppose *right or wrong*.* But having already, in a preceding Letter, expressed myself on that subject, I will add nothing to it here. His very constituents could have no desire to behold the remains of Hector thus repeatedly dragged round the walls of Troy by his inexorable opponent. Such wolves must be left to their own mode of ravening; to "dig the shrouded body from the grave," and, when they have consummated their pollutions, to retire into their dens. Where there is no shame there can be no reproach.

Of Mr. Fox, another subject of Mr. Coke's address, it falls not in with my present discussion to say much. His failings as a statesman were, I think, neither few, nor trivial. He was not wanting in wisdom, nor in the exercise of a sound judgment; but his benevolence drew upon his understanding too often and too largely. This was, I suspect, the source of most of his errors; "the head and front of his offending." Solon never forgot whom he was legislating for—Fox never remembered it. Solon framed for his countrymen such laws and monitions as they were able to bear—Fox was for giving a direction to the national counsels, which the national manners and feelings would have frustrated. At a period unparalleled in any history, when, with an equal devotedness to their country, and an almost equal puissance, he and his great rival "stood between the dead and the living," such was the awful suspense that prevailed, they might each be said to have lifted up their voices and to have launched the thunders of their eloquence in darkness. But now that time has passed over these departed scenes of desolation; now that we can review at leisure the ravages of the storm and the melancholy course it

* Norfolk Election and Scrutiny. Page 30.

took, and compare what was intended to have been the line of Mr. Fox's political conduct with what actually was the line of Mr. Pitt's ; we are justified, I think, in concluding that Mr. Fox's opinions would have been far enough from conducing to the national glory ; would, indeed, hardly have insured the national safety. His politics would have thrown England, and with England Europe, into the arms of France ; would have conducted in chains the kingdoms of the earth to swear fealty at the footstool of a regicide democracy. Mr. Pitt's stronger genius saved us from that shame ; saved us and sanctified us for the immortal nation we now are ! Yet was not Mr. Fox narrow in his views ; but the blendings of his soul were unfavourable to his fame. He knew what men ought to be, but was willing to forget what they were. He would not see the artifices of his own party ; he almost wished to be unacquainted with their spirit ; and so far did he carry his unbounded liberality as to veil from eyes, not naturally undiscerning, even the rancorous complexion, the deep and subtle views of our unprincipled foreign adversaries, who, however, soon took care to tell the world of what bitter elements a revolutionary temper is composed. Nor peace, nor neutrality, could we maintain with such a horde of regicides—nor peace, nor neutrality, could even Mr. Fox's eloquence inforce upon us. The determination of the senate, the voice of the country, the feelings of the people, fortunately went against him, and the fires of Moloch were kindled for our children in vain.

Yet let us be just to the memory of this illustrious character. There was a nobleness of nature about him that mixed itself with every thing he did and said. He was "a spirit of persuasion," that converted men to his faith by turning them to his love. There was no opposing Mr. Fox with a full soul, for something evermore mastered resistance, and sub-

duced opinion to feeling. He was unconscious often of his eloquence, and careless how he dressed his thoughts; but when his comprehensive mind had gathered up her powers, the rush was irresistible. There, where his hearers were most open, was he most alive and prevailing. He touched the passions in the very point of their coincidence with virtue, and brought them forth "warm from the heart and faithful to her fires." There was no separating the argument from the energy of his appeal. It was a hallowed flame, that while it melted and purified the soul, palsied, shattered, bound up all resistance from the understanding. Much, in my younger days, was I delighted with his clear and manly eloquence; nor though years are gone by, and harsher feelings have, perhaps, prevailed, and judgment exercised a severer sway, do I wish to blot the enchantment from my remembrance—

That strain again—it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets!*

His great points of opinion I must deem destructive, but his oratory is of the first cast. And something is there also superadded thereto, that will consecrate it with succeeding generations. Mr. Fox was all openness, all sincerity. Nothing of cunning entered his composition; nothing of malevolence harboured in his nature; the "hectic of a moment," it passed over his countenance, but never tarried in his breast. It was not his eloquence, it was not his reason, it was not his legislative capacity that constituted his power. That power sprang from sources still more sacred—from his ingenuous disposition—his warm benevolence—his free, honest, unsuspecting spirit, that wound itself into the affections, and, by giving to all

* Shakespear's Twelfth Night.

men their due, "drew all men after him." This was the secret of his authority, the signet of his despotism, the clue that opened to him the still recesses of the soul. When he had once laid his hand upon this chord, the diapason was compleat. He had no more enemies.

Such, gentlemen, is the character which Mr. Coke does so little credit to by his conduct, and which his partizans are for celebrating by their proposed annual commemorations. But though at no time a niggard of his praise, and warm, probably, before most men in his attachments, Mr. Fox would yet have brushed off with disdain the vain and worthless pretenders that are forming themselves on his model, and imbuing themselves with his sentiments, and fitting their recreant limbs to his armour, and shaping their baby forms to his gigantic stature. O could he know what wretched things would crawl about his ashes—what loathsome, venomous creatures, under the affectation of sanctifying his principles, would contaminate his memory—how would he loath the success of his own doctrines in the conversion of such a mob of democratical renegadoes as these—vampires, that after sucking the blood of departed genius, disgorge it under the form of poison upon their unhappy country! Of this man, a man of so full and noble a mind, it is to be regretted that any resemblance should there be found where only little minds will be fixed on its contemplation. Mr. Coke has "asked permission to place the pourtrait of that great statesman and true patriot in Holkham hall"* to very little purpose, if the view of so much benignity does not strike him with remorse for his regular anniversary butcheries of the character of Mr. Pitt.

I know not with what view the dictator ventured to

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

recal to our recollection the notable county meeting of 1817, his "march to Moscow," as some have not very unaptly termed it; for there it was that he and his compeers more openly and largely broached those sentiments which first taught us to suspect of what "radical reform" materials their politics was beginning to be composed. "Had you not a great meeting in this hall, and did not my noble friend the Earl of Albemarle and myself state to you what these men would do—that they would suspend the habeas corpus act."* Truly we had a great meeting in this hall—truly Mr. Coke's noble friend the Earl of Albemarle and himself did "state to us what ministers would do"—and all they then and there told us they would do we did approve of—and all they then and there told us they ought to do we did disapprove of—and all they then and there told us they were doing for the corruption of the constitution and the destruction of the empire, we did verily disbelieve, and gave our decided reprobation of. And so perfect was this disbelief, and so unqualified this reprobation, that when Mr. Pratt shortly after came forward, backed by the concentrated weight of Mr. Coke's interest, as a candidate for the vacant representation of the county, why we then and there defied Mr. Pratt and Mr. Coke, and, in the election of Edmond Wodehouse, Esq. as our representative in parliament, cast forth the whole firm of Hampden and Hunt, with all their democratical adherents, to the public derision and contempt. So much for the celebrated county meeting of the 5th of April, 1817, the discomfiture of which its projectors, it seems, have not the sense to suffer to sink into oblivion.

Of Mr. Coke's election dinner, at the republican rendezvous, nothing, that I am aware of, was suffered

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

to transpire. Rumour indeed was afloat that, on that occasion, his address, "at considerable length," was not of the most courteous complexion towards his opponents. I can readily believe it. So mortified in his very success, we would almost in pity excuse any thing from him short of county high treason. Besides, it was an allowed time; nor is there any celebrating the *saturnalia*, as we are all aware, without unbounded licence of speech. "Then crowned with garlands came the festive hour." It is at these Bacchanalian orgies that Mr. Coke and his partizans flatter themselves they are recovering their strength. A kindly heat which expands all bodies, a strong quixottic fancy, "changing every thing it sees into what it desires to see," shews them, after the fashion of the Scotch second sight, the distant scene of their county triumphs, and they actually behold the statues, pictures, golden crowns, the streets strewn with flowers, the altars smoking with incense, the dictator's chariot covered with laurel, and the fugitive house of Kimberley swelling the procession. Elated with "this invisible riot of the mind," their "winged words," hissing hot from the reformer's forge, fly forth in every direction, and as the fume mounts into the brain, the wisdom collects upon the lips. The Athenian raged not louder against Philip than these Holkham orators against existing administrations. All they understood they demonstrated to be infamous, and all they understood not they believed to be so.

And now that we have intruded upon their trencher ground, they will, I trust, bear with us if we venture a remark or two upon the subject. What are all their Whig dinners, their anniversary commemorations, their Crown and Anchor meetings, where by the initiated *intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur*, but instruments of disaffection and incentives to sedition? Whom get they huddled together upon those horta-

five occasions? All that will join them; all that will make common cause with them against the measures of government; all that, with them, will pour out their voices loaded with defamation against ministers and their supporters, against the church and its supporters, against abuses which exist only in their corrupt fancies, and oppressions which are felt and recognized as blessings by every body but themselves. Under one standard they all range—one name binds together whomsoever they can pick up “in the high ways and hedges.” Nothing at these meetings is to be found that can either captivate by its virtue, or convince by its solidity. Nothing indeed of the sort seems to be needed. All the orators have to do is to pour forth, at once, the whole sickening load of sedition that has been long worreting and working within them, certain that by the multitude, neither dainty nor discerning, it will be “swallowed in the mass unchewed and crude.” The pretences of these motly associates to constitutional devotedness, are too idle to require refutation. They remind us of the boasted exertions of Bonaparte to extinguish the burning of Moscow, which, as Count Rastopchin observed, he demonstrated by setting fire to the palace of the Kremlin, and destroying the very castle that had afforded him a refuge from the flames!

“They manage these matters better in France.” No, truly, not a whit. A Norwich anniversary dinner is conducted on nearly the same scale with a dinner in the focus of sedition. The Whigs of Westminster and the Whigs of Norfolk are, in this respect, pretty much inclined to shake hands. Upon these especial occasions Mr. Coke and my Lord Albemarle take care to put all their puny orators into requisition, and the instant “*Non nobis Domine*” is got rid of, up start you the Glovers, the Taylors, the Palmers, with the whole blue and white string of political dandies. *Scribimus indocti doctique*. These

gentry are all expected to exhibit, and dressing up their trumpery in the costume of the constitution (their state fiddle for all sorts of tunes) to show off the lean, lanky figures packed up in their political magic lanthorns, for the entertainment of honest John and the company, not forgetting, by the bye, to lard *secund. art.* the great Whig representative, who graciously "bends his brows and gives the nod," and seems mightily to relish the puppet scenery. The anniversary funguses thus produced are presently transplanted into the Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Mercury gardens, and, with their excrescences pruned off and licked into a little shape and meaning, they there become fair and hopeful plants. Know them again? I defy a single orator among them to say this is my literary brat, so smirched, and whaleboned, and tightened up are they in every joint and limb, and all over so fumed and flumneried. Madame Tussaud's celebrated wax-work figures do look a little life-like, and a spark of animation certainly hovers around them; but though surrounded at the moment of their birth by wine, and wit, and all the incense of Arabia, these wretched, ricketty imps scarcely discover a breathing of common sense about them; a most vile set of pantomimics, which, seen by candle-light, men affect to admire, but which beheld in their naked draperies, and in the face of day, they would blush to have bestowed a single glance upon. In good truth, we as little know these Whig dinner and anniversary speeches when they get into the papers, as we should recognize certain of our old friends in the event of a revolution, where the family names would be sent packing, and nothing heard (in the majestic slang of "the great nation,") but the *Emperor Francis*, the *Napoleon the Great* of the British republic, *King Cobbet* and *King Hunt*, the *Archdukes Wooler* and *Waithman*, *Prince Edward* of Norwich, *Prince Nathaniel* of Yarmouth, and, perched by the

side of his Holiness of Rome, and ready to nestle himself into his very seat, his eminence (lower but by half a peg) the *Cardinal of Cromer*!

These anniversary commemorations are now becoming, and are, in fact, intended as a sort of rallying point with the *Whig* party, as it is most proposterously called, dispersed throughout the kingdom, and with all who are disposed to range under their "Norwegian banners," that are beginning to "flout the sky and fan our people cold." Of their utility, so far as concerns our county, gentlemen, I entertain every doubt; of their danger and absurdity none. For though, allowing Homer and Lycurgus to have met together, great things might naturally have been expected from such an interview in the reciprocal communication of their stores of knowledge, I really do not think any conference on the rise and fall of empires, or on the best method of "making their Jewish markets of the throne," between the regent of Norfolk, the delegate of Norwich, and the posse comitatus of Fox's anniversary dinner, would be productive of much benefit either to the present times or to posterity. The temples of the world might indeed have been proud to be adorned by the wisdom and philosophy of the former, but I know of no temple—save one—at all likely to be honoured by an intaglio of the *Whig* principles conjured up between the latter. Seriously, these "interchanges of political sentiments and feelings"*—these "evenings of good fellowship,"* can never enough be regretted. Who can behold, without harsher thoughts than he may chuse to clothe in words, our gentlemen

* *Norwich Mercury*, Jan. 30, 1819; where, and in the *Norfolk Chronicle* of the same date, the reader will find a recital of the proceedings at the commemoration of Mr. Fox's birth-day, and the speeches of the Earl of Albemarle on that occasion. To the political reputation which his lordship has long possessed, these speeches will be certainly no discredit.

of rank and property sinking themselves to a level with men, whom, under other circumstances than that of an unaccountable party mania against the measures of administration, they would justly despise—not scrupling company and converse with them; receiving and entertaining them at their houses as selected guests, and sending them forth from thence, covered by blandishments of no ordinary cast, if not countenanced and commissioned, yet certainly not forbidden to “take the current when it serves,” and to stir up all the tumultuous passions against the executive government they can find afloat? Is this a conduct worthy of ancient and honourable houses in the county of Norfolk, or in any county? Is this a conduct to attach respectable freeholders to a standard under which all are invited to range who have eloquence, or impudence, or any other inflammable commodity to dispose of? Is this a conduct to support either the established laws or the established religion of the realm; to invest representatives with the present, or to secure to them the future approbation of their constituents?—Is it not a conduct to ruin and for ever to annihilate both?

What however by these periodical congregatings they will do, or what they can do, or what, when the unsightly parts are covered up among them, and their ruder spirits cast into the red sea, they hereafter intend to do, must be left to the “old justicer” to determine. In the mean while, gentlemen, disincumbered of a part of our load, let us pursue our journey, and, as we pass along, give a glance at our *City politics* (which possibly lurked at the bottom of the late projected county contest,) and at the probable issue likewise of such contest, had it in the hour of their “moon-light madness,” actually taken place.

The recent successes, in their canvassing, of the blue and white interest at Norwich and Yarmouth, may with some reason be supposed to have en-

couraged the opposition to the quiet return of Mr. Wodehouse. It was suspected that the popular tide was running so powerfully in favour of that interest, as to render it likely, that a contest began upon such a foundation, would not be begun in vain. It might also be within the verge of meditation, that, at any rate, to draw upon the purse of their opponents would be some furtherance of their designs, some demonstration of the spirit with which they intended to enter upon their task, some sample of the reserved stores which these Whig reformers have hoisted up for the sustenance of their own future fortunes and the overthrow of his. With the proceedings at the latter of these places, it comes not within the scope of this Letter to interfere. Mr. Lacon's family has, I understand, served the town of Yarmouth; but the season for further services of a like description is at an end. Does Mr. Lacon so little know mankind as to hope that gratitude will survive when that which gave life and vigour to it is no more?

O let not virtue seek

Remuneration for the thing it was!

I would advise him to repose upon his own silent and forgotten deserts, and to give up a disgraceful representation to those who are suffered to prevail without desert. The borough of Great Yarmouth (which, it seems, a leading demagogue or two may at any time advertize to be bought or sold,) will probably e'er long find its punishment in its success. From a slip of the house of Holkham what grafting will obtain for them any other than a sour and unpalatable fruit, which they may "dig about and dung;" but that, most likely, must eventually be cut down as a cumberer of the ground? I hope we shall be indulged with no more of these "gratifying scenes.*" I hope

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

“the fire of such independence”* will smoulder where it broke forth, and never pass the bounds of its present sanctuaries; for if it “spread through the county,”* tis well if it stop until it light up the torch of disaffection in every quarter of the kingdom.—Admiral Lukin would, I am sure, be the last man in the world to wish his prophecy fulfilled under such a presumption. But, luckily for the community, that prophecy, by a voice too potent to be either mistaken or resisted, stands confounded in its own helplessness. Let the gallant Admiral rest assured, that “the best time to fight” with one another is not when an overwhelming democratical spirit is ready to seize and raven upon us all.

Upon the supposition that the success of the blue and white interest at Norwich did really, in a certain degree, influence the county proceedings, it may be necessary not entirely to pass by an otherwise disgusting subject. Of city politics I know, indeed, little or nothing; yet in all cases of so public a nature, there will be enough that lies level and open to every man’s understanding. The secret history of Mr. William Smith and Mr. Gurney’s election does not offer itself before the face of day. The city doings, as soon as they are over, are generally packed up, and systematically forgotten. I can have no doubt, however, from the character of our opponents for management, that throughout the whole of that notable business the rule and line were applied to every thing; that all was carefully weighed and accurately examined, and the probabilities of success calculated to a nicety. “Chance is direction which thou can’st not see,” not only in the senate house arrangements at Cambridge, but in the electioneering proceedings at Norwich. In the latter instance it may not merely be direction

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

but corruption that we cannot see. I wish the ar-
cana of these popular proceedings could be fairly
laid open. Indeed for the good of society, and for our
instruction in immaculate ways and means of bringing
in well conditioned representatives, it were perhaps
desirable that the celebrated Mr. Cleary would come
down, and with his superior talents for promulgation,
“take care that the whole of Europe should know it,”*
though, after all, there might be a doubt whether the
whole of Europe would feel very deeply concerned
with the *cleansing week* machinations of the Long
Ward of Norwich. Mr. William Smith is, indeed,
accused by a very honourable gentleman, of “having
refused to vote for him, because he was not a Whig,
but a sincere and earnest friend of the people.”*
What a pity Mr. Hunt did not know that by actually
professing himself “a sincere and earnest friend of
the people,” Mr. Smith was mainly indebted for his
own election. But so it is—great men have not their
wits nor their information about them at all times, or
the Westminster orator would surely never have been
ignorant that a happy coincidence of feeling had
yoked him to the same plough with the Norwich
representative, and that both, at the same instant, were
intuitively working, and diving, and digging their
way into the popular heart with precisely the same
tools!

From what at the time I was able indistinctly to
gather, Mr. Harbord's election seems to have been
lost, not from a delay, unaccountable and inexcusable
as it was, in the determination to oppose the blue and
white interest, but from an ignorance of the altera-
tion that had taken place in the city in the extension
of the elective franchise. The increase in the num-
ber of votes led to this victory, “an increase (as was

* See the Star of July 2, 1818.

† Star, July 1.

observed) found to have arisen principally from a settled and long-formed design on the part of the winning candidates to secure a certain victory. It lies chiefly, we are told, in the freeholders, augmented by annuitants. Of this fact the leaders of the orange and purple party seem to have been in total ignorance."* Where falls the censure? What—with the hearts of their adversaries full before them—with their machinations by night and by day constantly sounding in their ears—with a sufficient feeling of their power, and a more than sufficient experience of their treachery, could the Harveys, the Days, the Ketts, the Backs, and every active and intelligent mind among them sleep at their posts, and hesitate, or despond, or while away those golden hours that ought, one by one, to have come loaded with additional securities against their subtle and enterprising enemies? We with difficulty pity failures that result from such a negligence as this. It is not pleasant for a candidate to be invited to an unpromising contest—for a candidate of a thorough constitutional complexion, it is not politic. I know not, however, that Mr. Harbord deserves the praise which has since his rejection been somewhat suspiciously lavished upon him. Indeed I am almost inclined to hope he does not; for it seems to me to go the length of nearly assimilating him with those unsteady politicians who are never constant in their opinions two moons together, and can hardly determine whether, on the broad line of general conduct, they will be most likely to side with, or to oppose an existing administration. "His (Mr. Harbord's) election could only have been gained by a sudden revolution of popular feeling, and the people in such cases, he needs not to be told, are only to be wrought upon by a display of talent, generosity, enterprize, and

* Norwich Mercury, June 20, 1818.

determination, brilliant, open, captivating, resistless. The candidate must woo opinion like a mistress, and offer himself to every occasion with the gallantry of a soldier of fortune."* What sort of doctrine is this? It carries with it truly a gallant sounding, but I am am yet to be made a convert to its seeming sense and bearing. If it mean any thing, it is an intimation that Mr. Harbord should have followed the track of his competitors, and made his obesance to the popular idol, or in more appropriate terms perhaps, to "the sovereignty of the people." "Mr. Harbord came upon a forlorn hope"—that, I fear, we must admit. "He would have stood higher on the poll had his real sentiments been better understood;"—that, I hope, looking to the learned editor's leaning towards a "liberal and enlightened" construction of such sentiments, and to the sound attachment to our established government, civil and ecclesiastical, of those by whom he was supported, we may with one heart and one voice be allowed peremptorily to deny. "This gentleman has been much misrepresented, and we believe he now regrets that he has had so little opportunity of vindicating his principles more generally."* I have never yet understood in what this misrepresentation consisted. Assuredly it could not consist in taking him for, and speaking of, and treating him as a fit candidate for the expression and representation of those genuine constitutional principles which politically characterize the *purple and orange* interest of the city of Norwich.

The thing, however, is gone by, and the discomfiture, though not decisive, has yet been sufficiently mortifying, inasmuch as by ingenuous conduct, timely union, and only ordinary foresight, much might have been carried off what, in seasons so unsettled as the

* Norwich Mercury, June 20, 1818.

present, it were so desirable to have carried. Permit me, gentlemen, under these circumstances, without the imputation of wandering from my subject, to advert to a few of the goodly instruments by which, in their triumphal career, our adversaries seem to have worked. If city representation be at all an object, which it ever must be if the preservation of church and state be an object, and it be an object with men to indulge in laudable ambitions, by discovering their line of conduct, we may be better able hereafter to model our own. It is allowable to imitate the weapons of an enemy and to improve our means of annoyance by the examination of theirs, as the wreck of the Carthaginian vessels gave a turn to the manner of the Roman ship-building, that presently insured to them the dominion of the sea. I will not however say that we are at liberty, in any case, to use envenomed darts, or to poison the common stream. Success so atchieved is infamy.

One of the first instruments then, among the blue and whites, in the furtherance of freedom of election, is what is termed the system of cooping. This, I understand, is but too much of a mutual practice, and is surely sufficiently obnoxious, sufficiently degrading, and sufficiently ridiculous. These honest souls are, it seems, not kept in their virtuous plight at a little cost; for, pending the eve of an election, they are calling out for tit bits morning, noon, and night, and threatening to forswear "worshipful society" if they have not ham and eggs to breakfast, a table fit for an alderman for dinner, and the best Cogniac to top up with after supper. Supporters of the constitution these! Supporters, I presume, of the Norwich union club and Holkham constitution. O mark and avoid them. Be you sons of freedom with hearts made of a different stuff, and with affections pointed to a very different object. It is a bad game to play when we corrupt the common mind to bad party purposes.—

There is a point, if we carry not about with us a seared conscience, at which our most outrageous feelings, our most determined hostilities must pause; because there is a point at which determined hostility will shudder at the means it is delusively employing. The system of corruption is a system that must fail us. It carries with it both its own destruction and ours. The baseness of those means by which we may drive out our opponent, or subvert an existing administration, or a ruling government, shall soon be pointed, and with no impotent effect, against whatever rule or order we may establish in their place. Let us buy our allies in sedition or villainy once, and we must purchase them again and again; and whatever may be the *maximum* of bribery to day, we must bribe higher to-morrow. As there is no stop on their part, there must be none on ours. They are prepared for the debasement of their souls to absolute rottenness, and, if we would make our market of this disgusting ruin, we must subject ourselves to a like debasement. For never let us flatter our pride or our virtue, that he who is willing to corrupt is not, to the full, as guilty as he who is willing to be corrupted, and to the full, in every part of his conduct, as amenable to the public judgment, and as deserving of the public indignation. Could such minds, indeed, by such measures, insure stability to their ill-acquired success, no bribery of minds as politically hardened as their own ought, prudentially considered, to be held too extravagant. The misfortune, or rather, socially speaking, the blessing is, that in all cases of this kind, where we thus dare to "erase the sanctuary" of our common frailties, the slaves become the masters, and, by an equitable retributory process, extort conditions almost at their pleasure. It is your's, freeholders, by a different exercise of the elective right, to stem this foul torrent of city licentiousness; to shame them, if possible, into a nobler way of think-

ing, an honest mode of acting ; to show them what men are, and what vile shreds and patches of men both those who practice and those who permit themselves to be practiced upon by such wretched exponents are. I care not of what party such persons call themselves. It is a despicable party that can stoop to moral violations for the furtherance of political interests.*

* On the subject of Norwich ward corruption much has been advanced on both sides. Both have admitted its existence to an alarming degree ; and the only question of dispute seems to be, which of the parties is the most guilty, and who first introduced this pest. Mr. J. J. Gurney, in a letter to the magistrates of Norwich, lamented this disgraceful practice in very warm terms, but in a manner that, it appears, gave reason to believe he thought the odium of it rested principally with the *orange* party. This brought forth a short but forcible reply from Mr. Atkinson, who observes, “ does not the sin, Sir, lie at the door of those who last year subscribed many thousand pounds to bribe and corrupt the freemen of the long ward ? Were not these poor men, after they had promised to vote in the same interest they had always supported, induced to break their promises by bribes of 40*l.* and 50*l.* ? a temptation too great to be resisted by most needy voters ! Were not a large number of these men *cooped up* at one of Mr. R. G.’s tenants at Northrepps, and there maintained in idleness and drunkenness ? And did not the same disgraceful scene pollute Haptonhall ? Were not the carriages of some of the Gurney family employed in conveying these miserable promise-breakers, in a beastly state of intemperance, to the poll ? And did we not, for the first time, see *Quakers*, who refuse to bow to Royalty itself, pulling off their hats and saluting, with encouraging approbation, these intoxicated wretches ? ” I have seen no answer from Mr. Gurney to this bold statement. An anonymous writer, indeed, who is not wanting in spirit, nor, to give him his due, in force, in his “ Letter to the Freemen of the Ward of Wymer,” has defended the Gurney family from these severe imputations. But, I fear, he will not be deemed a sufficient advocate ; for Mr. Francis (in a mild but effectual Letter to the Editor of the *Norwich Mercury*, May 8, 1819,) has already detected him in a rather gross misrepresentation ; and the editor himself, as well as Mr. Francis, hints at other very weak parts of his pamphlet. The reply to Mr. Francis is, I think, defective. The Gurney family, however, (with one single unhappy exception) will, I trust, find their best advocate, where

Another potent instrument with which the blue and white sons of freedom work, in order to increase and insure their city influence, is the press. Almost all their dealings herein are, indeed, in a coarse and little way, but still the expedient goes round and answers. The petty aspersion gets into circulation, and generally in time for the political purpose, the character is pretty well disposed of. Towards this essential accomplishment they put into requisition every species of vendible literature. Whatever article best answers the demand, becomes the staple commodity of the firm. Nothing is too great, nor is any thing too low and contemptible for them to trade in. They have all sorts of goods for all sorts of customers. They have sound wares for the understanding, and trash and tinsel for the simple. Their dealings, in short, (to say nothing of their perennial resources in the new *speaker of the commons*,)* are upon a scale of almost endless variety; from the "Agriculture of Holkham" and the "Considerations on Cambridge," to the songs and sonnets of Bridewell-alley; from the daring sublimities of the Athenian sage, to the vile gropings after genius by the "blind Meonides" of Southrepps.

they have ever found it, in their own bosoms; and let them rest assured, that the less they know of the political world, the more they will be respected by it, and the better they will thrive in it.

*. How is it that this gentleman has contrived to get so completely into the good graces of our provincial editors? For no sooner does he rise to deliver himself, than instantly follows you a long column of most commanding eloquence from the *speaker of the commons*; from, in fact, one who, I suspect, was never known to deal very largely, (whether very much to the purpose or no I leave out of the question) in political speaking before. My respect for this gentleman's character and connections in private life, induces me to regret that the rotation of fortune's wheel should ever have cast him upon so public and exposed a station. He has attained, I know not how, to a giddy height. I wish him once more safe and sound upon terra firma.

Not certainly devoted to the blue and white interest; not probably very highly in their confidence, but still sufficiently at times in unison with their principles, our provincial papers, the *Norwich Mercury* and the *Norfolk Chronicle*, too often play into the hands of these political jugglers. The former of these periodical records, though with manifest regret and a desire, at intervals, to return to its native home, is, I think, gradually partaking of many of the characteristics of an opposition print. It is seriously to be lamented that a work, whose *postscript* is written with such ability, should be, in so many instances, objectionable, and in some even adverse to, if not destructive of the best interests of the community. It is to be lamented that the very manner of its composition should be of so ensnaring a texture, and that the eloquence of its language should add such authority to the unfriendliness of its sentiments. The learned editor must be aware how many reasons, in all cases, there are for the support of an established government—how many additional reasons in support of a government established like our own—how many reasons, doubling in potency upon him, for its support in times, among adversaries, and under circumstances like the present. He must also be aware of the difficulties which surround the executive duties of any and every existing administration in this country, where impediments of a countless description—impediments arising from patriotic, from perverse, from vain, from ambitious, from interested and malicious opposition, are hourly harrassing the process, and injuring the tendency, and palsying the effects of the best concerted measures. Yet how frequently do his lucubrations tend to diminish our veneration for the one and to annihilate every feeling of respect towards the other. Few men can read the *Norwich Mercury* without having their hopes and fears strongly influenced, and frequently their faith and patience put to the

severest test. All hot and feverish, all glowing and animated and eloquent as it is, we are not, believe me, permitted to rise from its perusal with neutral feelings. Bold in its assumptions, rich in its materials, lofty in its tone and language, frequently not unhappy in its argument, and always daring and decisive in its conclusions, it compels its readers into active service either for or against the cause it advocates, for or against the constituted authorities of the realm. If it carry us not on to the conservation, it will hurry us into the demolition of all that ought to be held sacred. If it fail to make us patriots, it will turn us into as errant demagogues as ever contaminated the soil of a free country; for it carries about with it a circean charm that throws its readers into the bed of a political voluptuousness, where, if they attempt to sleep, they die.

The *Norfolk Chronicle*, more guarded and uniformly more mild and conciliating, can yet not, I think, be considered as, in the main, firm to the orange interest, though, in a certain degree, friendly to it—I repeat in a certain degree, for it is neither warm nor even regular in its friendship. But if that interest be, as many believe and feel, the interest of society well regulated, and turning in all the changes and chances of political warfare, to an hereditary monarchy and an established church as its best security for established freedom and comfort, it is surely no crime to wish that, at least, one of our provincial papers should be entirely and cordially devoted to it; should be so devoted as to slur over nothing that makes for, nor directly or indirectly to clap its recommendatory seal upon any thing that is likely to tell against it. At any rate, until some editor shall arise who, discarding the *dubius mentis*, will conduct a public record of this description in the spirit of a determined opposition to all county Whig orators, all “ra-dical reformers” and revolutionists, all Socinian

morality and sectarian politics, all infidel doctrines and republican practices, the blue and white faction of the city of Norwich will have a manifest advantage over their constitutional adversaries. What, is there not power, is there not inclination, is there not ability enough in the orange party, if these provincial papers conscientiously cannot, or prudentially dare not, or perversely will not, advocate their cause—is there not spirit enough among them to set up and support a paper of their own, and to withdraw all encouragement from those who so inadequately answer the expectations and fulfil the hopes of such as believe the country to be in danger, and who are therefore unanimous in their support of established government? Surely this might be done with, at least, an equal probability of success with that which has attended “The Norwich and Yarmouth Courier,” a sickly conditioned thing, planted and nurtured by the deistical leaders of the blue and white firm, and which, had it not been bolstered up by medical infidelity and republican rancour, would long since have fled with the shades of night. Yet is this the paper, it seems, that “has the cordial support of all the principal leaders of the Whig party in the county.”* If such be the fact (and it is strongly and respectably asserted) the Whig party of Norfolk deserve every reprobation that has been cast upon the Whig character by the Burdetites of Westminster. If I could seriously believe that they, “the first men in the county,” did cordially support the Norwich Courier, “as the only sure vehicle of the Whig party,”* I should hardly hesitate to conclude, that they would support too, Cobbet’s

* See the speech of Mr. Archdeacon Bathurst, at the celebration of Mr. Fox’s birth-day, as given in the Norwich Courier of January 30, 1819, where the above assertion is reported to be made “from his own knowledge,” and where he represents it as the general wish of the Whig party, that this paper “should be supported by every means of advertisements and circulation!”

Journal; Wooler's Black Dwarf, Hone's Sacred Parodies, and though last, not least, an exposition of the genuine fundamental Whig principle of "the Sovereignty of the People,"* by Edward Taylor, Esq. president of the Norwich Union Society, nominee of "the great Northern Ward," and the friend of every "wise and good man" who has courage enough to abuse church and state.†

Nor, further, are conventicles and bible societies to be utterly despised as instruments of political superiority. The blue and whites, themselves for the most part conventicle and bible society men, bring up and play off this battery upon us with assured success.—The conventicle is their manufactory for all articles of reform in church and state. From that storehouse of disaffection they fetch out their republican materials and their recipes for "rump parliaments."—

* Norwich Courier, January 30, 1819.

† This gentleman, in a Letter on the state of Ireland, inserted in the Norwich Courier of September 5, 1818, is pleased to express himself as follows:—"I would recommend the *Rev.* Mr. Burges, whose religion seems to consist in heaping abuse and scurrility upon the wise and good, before he ventures again to attack the character of Mr. Coke as a landlord and agriculturist, to visit Ireland." With the former part of this extract I am alone concerned: Mr. Taylor does here unjustly accuse me of abusing "the wise and good." Such men I have ever taught myself to consider as sacred from censure. But I can easily believe that "the wise and good," in Mr. Edward Taylor's estimation, would be far enough from either wise, or good in the estimation of any one else. On such men, probably as like to himself as he can find them, I trust I shall never cease to heap "abuse and scurrility." Of "the wise and good" of this description, that would tear the mitre from the head of the church, and plant the diadem on the brow of democracy, I will continue to speak as I think; and I tell them to their head, that, as patriots, as citizens, as supporters of the British constitution, I can hardly think worse of them than I do. From such "wise and good men," (viewing the matter in a mere political light) come they from Holkham, or come they from Quiddendenham, or, thoroughly cleansed and purified, come they even from "the Great Ward of Wymer," Providence and proper legislative regulations protect us!

There they club their abilities for a sort of *pic nic* answer to all opponents. There they prove to their admiring congregations that we should be better without an ecclesiastical establishment than with one, and that a Socinian synod of the delegate's "wise and good men" is before all the episcopal benches in the world. There these tabernacle divines go to work in earnest, and do more in a week in settling the knotty points of theology than our superannuated establishment in a twelvemonth. Why, gentleman, while a deep sleep has fallen upon the church all the learning and virtue of the realm have actually crept into the conventicle. There the spirit of the protectorate breathes night and day—there the politics of the protectorate are in ceaseless operation—there the religion of the protectorate "flourishes like a green bay tree"—and there, to bang up this precious pious business to its last fervours, the restoration of that happy golden age is predicted when, as these profound astrologers assure us, religion and government shall run upon their own wheels without a penny of expence to any one—when there shall be no occasion for laws to restrain vice, or for industry to procure sustenance, but that all shall be amply provided for, and free, and happy, and virtuous, and obedient by the mere force of democratical feeling and Socinian instinct. This approximates, I conceive, to that state so admirably depicted by the poet as the consummation of our earthly political perfection.

I' the commonwealth I would by contraries

Execute all things: for no kind of traffic

Would I admit; no name of magistrate;

Letters should not be known; no use of service,

Of riches or of poverty; no contracts,

Successions; bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none:

No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil:

No occupation; all men idle, all;

And women too; but innocent and pure:

No sovereignty.*

* Shakespear's *Tempest*.

In the contemplation of such felicity are these blue and white phaetons petitioning Apollo to intrust them with the reins of his chariot for only one little day, and in that nick of time do they undertake to fire the world about our ears and purify at once Lords and Commons, high Church and low, Whigs and Tories, Placemen and Pensioners, the aristocratical kingdom of the continent of Europe, and the whole of the purple and orange interest, in the departments of Conisford, Mancroft, Wym̄er, and the Ward beyond the Water, in the city of Norwich!

But there is another instrument of influence which our adversaries make use of, and, compared with which, as to its local effects, the rest are but mere paper and pack thread. What I mean, gentlemen, is the *association system*, or the playing into each others hands in all matters and on all occasions any way connected with their public or private interest. They have, at one time or other, read us many lessons of vexation, but, properly digested, they may turn out lessons of profit too. What opportunities do they suffer to escape them of rivetting and binding up this system? Where men are constantly laying their political baits and digging their ambushes, they must be dangerous, whether they be honourable adversaries or not.—They have chalked out a road, which, if we are desirous of frustrating their machinations and of cementing the orange interest, we shall be compelled, I apprehend, to follow. Active, hostile, working in the dark for weeks, and months, and years, and often so working as to set all decency and delicacy, and, in consequence, all calculation at defiance, are we to meet such expedients by a sleepy reliance upon the common place measures and maxims that have formerly insured success? Is not every thing these men do done in the true electioneering spirit and with the sole view to their electioneering interest? Where do you see a dissenter leaving his own shop to go to a

churchman's? All their business they prudently do at home. The dissenting interest is with them the dissenting interest every hour of the day, and only where, by some crooked device, they can turn their penny into a shilling and their shilling into a pound, do they touch, taste, or handle any thing appertaining unto the church.

Yes—the blue and white, or dissenting party—for the terms at Norwich are nearly convertible—beat us by a policy at once as narrow and pitiful in its spirit as it is effective in its operation. While they obey one part of the Christian precept by being “wise as serpent,” they leave us to evince, by the simplicity of our conduct, the happy application of the other. Does a Socinian lawyer, a Socinian physician, a Socinian tradesman, ever lose sight of this grand compactive principle? Is any temporal business transacted which is not transacted upon this “one and indivisible” ground? Are not their public charities, their private benevolences conducted, as far as may be, in the like spirit? Nay, do they not even, in the same breath, bestow a bible to secure our salvation in the next world, and ask a vote to insure their election in this? A blue and white sticks to a blue and white in every important, every petty transaction. Not even a pound of sugar, or a pennyworth of soap, is disposed of without the “electioneering symbol” stamped upon its forehead; so solicitous seem they to draw their line of circumvallation around all that may conduce to their interest.

But what, gentlemen, suffer me to ask, what is the conduct of the *purple and orange party* herein? How do they manage the barter and brokerage system, the allowances of tare and tret? With what sort of feelings do they behold these petty granulated links which their blue and white neighbours are adding, drop by drop, to the dissenting chain, till it become powerful enough to “bind our kings” and to

fetter the nobles of the land? Truly they give themselves no sort of trouble at all about it. Good easy creatures! they bank with the blue and whites, and they buy with the blue and whites, and they counsel with the blue and whites, and they physic with the blue and whites. The blue and whites are their corn factors, their merchants, their drapers, their grocers, their very butchers and barbers, and man-milliners. In short, they every way suffer themselves to be palavered and pillaged by them; and when they have sucked their brains, and lightened their purses, and fairly milked them dry, why instantly they are off to the slave market, and, *with the purple and orange money, actually purchase the very blue and white votes against them.*

Now it is perfectly clear that these men, to be met with any prospect of success, must be met and contended with upon their own ground and with their own weapons—their own steps must be followed, their own devices adopted, and that must, in some degree, be done for our safety, which, on cooler reflection, we might hesitate to do for our credit. Let us then turn their arts and their assurance against them. Let us form our system of counteraction, and, like certain of their own late high official characters, confine the run of our custom where we can depend upon the adoption of our principles. And, be assured, until we do so, the blue and white interest will have the mastery over us in every city regulation and every popular election. In the words of an able editor, “new combinations must arise and new talents must be engaged to stimulate, unite, and lead, before a contest can be hazarded with the smallest probability of success;”* and, contemptible as they may appear, these are the kind of combinations that

* Norwich Mercury, June 20, 1818.

have long been the heart and soul of this faction, not only in the city of Norwich, but in every part of the British Empire. These then must be met, on our side, by measures of a similar description, which, without partaking of much of their meanness, or any of their rancour, may yet possess no inconsiderable portion of their efficacy. The thing is not a matter of choice—it is not a deduction of judgment—it is far enough from an act of approbation—but it is expedient—it is imperiously imposed upon us, and, until we have more generous adversaries, we must submit to it.

The last dangerous instrument which these gentlemen use to insure their influence is one which I must mention, though I can barely trust myself to touch upon it. It is an instrument, moreover, that I am willing to believe is no less reprobated by many of the more respectable of their own party than scorned by the greater part of ours. The instrument I allude to is slander—slander constantly hawked about under the coarsest coverings, with a view of degrading the characters of such as feel it their duty to oppose the blue and white politics of the city, but which, in fact, is only a disgrace to those “snakes in the grass,”* who

* I must here waste a note upon an unworthy subject. I was present at the Guildhall, in Norwich, June 16, 1818, when Mr. Steward Alderson addressed the new mayor (Barnabas Leman, Esq.) on coming into office, and the old one (Crisp Brown, Esq.) on going out; and I think I may venture to say, that an address more incautious, more insulting, more poor and weak, and every way disgusting, was never intruded upon an audience. The learned Steward complained that “he had never had the honour of Mr. Brown’s confidence.” I can well believe it. I only wonder, looking upon his political and religious life throughout, how he has managed to possess the honour of any man’s confidence. The rebukes received by Mr. Brown, upon that occasion, from Mr. Alderson, need never give him a moment’s uneasiness; they rather, indeed, serve to strengthen his claim upon public approbation, and to seal his merit with the sober part of the community.

are mean and cowardly enough to countenance, or employ it. Whatever may be the advantages of this tomahawk and scalping system, (and, on the spur of the occasion, it is possible they may not be small,) I hope that honourable minds will evince a sufficient feeling of decorum to forego them, and will treat all such methods of increasing their influence with indignity. Let them be buried, where they are first cradled, with dark and narrow and dirty souls. The dastard that flies from the public attack of a man's political principles, to the private slander of his domestic connections, can have no feelings in common with generous minds of either party, and ought equally to be blackballed and given up to ignominy by both.

These, gentlemen, are some of the instruments by which the blue and white party, the dissenting interest, the Whig junto, the radical reformers, for it is daily, I fear, becoming more and more immaterial by which of these designations they are characterized, have obtained and are increasing their city influence, and by which they hope, at no distant period, to increase also Mr. Coke's county influence. Mr. Coke's county influence it is certainly becoming necessary to increase; for, some how or other, his celebrity is getting materially upon the wain, and, like many popular characters that have figured away before him, he may live long enough to outlive his reputation. Of the result of a county contest during the late dissolution, had it been adventured upon, I should have thought there could not have been two opinions. But as I perceive that both Mr. Coke and his party affect to consider their success as certain, had they made the attempt, I will hazard a few remarks on the subject, though I do it with reluctance, as it only serves to waste time upon helpless absurdity, and to detain me longer from the more important drift of my Letter.

Upon what ground it could be taken up I know not, but certainly the opinion was (and continues to be) current, both that present success might have been and that future success would be insured in the event of a county contest. Mr. Philip Hamond, in his address to the freholders on relinquishing the honour intended him, goes off like a true Parthian, with declaring, "I trust, however, the day is not far distant when we shall see the principles of real independence asserted, and again triumphantly maintained in the county of Norfolk."* In adverting to the flame of freedom which had burst out, and which promised such glorious effects, Mr. Coke "ascribed them to a cause which afforded him great pleasure; they had arisen out of the blessings of peace, which had created a spirit of independence,"* and immediately subjoins, "my own opinion is that if the battle had been fought in this county it would have terminated in the same manner."* To this, in the true quixotte style, he adds "I was as ready to fight that gentleman as any of the committee, and had it gone on, the popular feeling would have carried it as at Yarmouth and Norwich."* If I could be induced to suspect the integrity of any part of Mr. Coke's political statement, I should do it in the present instance. These are assertions so bold, so barefacedly against general credibility, so uncalled for, so unlooked for, so totally at variance with all the appearances floating about him, all the convictions glowing around him, all the symptoms of cool, collected, determined hostility arrayed against him, that I can only believe such a declaration honourable by believing it to be insane. The gauntlet, however, thus preposterously thrown down, I venture to take up. Mr. Coke and his party did not dare to try this

* See the Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

contest, yet they dare to triumph in the anticipation of its issue ;* they did not dare to try it, because they too fearfully and too justly suspected the inevitable result of it ; that it would have shaken the influence and credit of their great idol to its base, and covered these pragmatistical prophecies with the ignominy they deserved.

For such presumption it is natural to ask what were the foundations? His partizans will probably answer, the consistency of Mr. Coke's political principles, his agricultural fame, and his unspotted reputation in private life. Against Mr. Coke's private life I can say nothing if I were desirous, nor should I be desirous if there were any thing to say. We should separate at all times, as much as possible, a man's political notions from his private character and conduct ; not because we have a right, or are under any obligations to spare private conduct where it deserves reproach, but because, generally speaking, reflections of this nature are carried to indefensible lengths, frequently to the very verge of slander, do more or less give uneasiness to his domestic relations, and point against the bosom of others that severity which should only attach upon the offender. Still the line of demarcation is indefinite, the course we will pursue is optional, though, if we be prudent and have any generosity in our composition, we shall consider a man's private connections as neutral, as, in most instances, sacred ground, and forbear to violate it. I can easily believe Mr. Coke's assertion that he has "no other than political foes." In me, at least, he

* In this opinion, which Mr. Coke repeated at the late celebration of Mr. Fox's birth-day, he does not stand alone. Many of the leading men of his party have made, and are daily making, similar absurd declarations. The lawyers and bankers of the Holkham treasury bench affect to be equally confident. Yes—they *affect* to be so.

has no other, and I am yet to learn that, amid the host of his opponents, the *malus animus* is to be found among any of them. In his domestic relations few will have the heart, and fewer still the temerity to attack him. To this "city of refuge" he can at all times flee and be safe, let his political crimes or follies have been what they may. Its gates are ever open to receive him, its inmates ever ready to pardon him; and beholding only his virtues and feeling only his benevolence, in the splendour of his bounty they forget (and God forbid I should blame them for it) the very existence of his infirmities.

In this sacred temple let us leave his lamp burning and brightening upon all around him. Ours is a more painful task, to trace him through a stormy sky where he glimmers for a while and is then lost amid the overpowering darkness. On Mr. Coke's political consistency, though he declaims so largely himself, the less his partizans insist the better. Mr. Southwell tells us that his honourable friend "had never seceded from his first principles of public conduct—not an inch—not a hair's breadth, had he deviated from those principles which he had imbibed even with his mother's milk; and he would die rather than desert them,"* and he tells it with such an air of triumph that we may be assured he looks upon it as a fair ground of boasting. We may venture to say of Mr. Coke's principles, as Ben Johnson said of Shakespear's poetry, that it would have redounded to his credit had his expurgations been more numerous. For to what have these principles tended? To no good purpose under the sun. They have neither added to the glory of his country, nor to the "character of the freeholders of Norfolk." That character he has, on the contrary, laboured to deteriorate by every means

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

in his power. But he has laboured in vain. The greater portion of these freeholders have larger and more correct views than he has ever given them credit for. They talk less of the principles of the revolution of 1688, but evince, by their conduct, that they understand them better, and feel them nearer to and warmer at their hearts. The character of the Norfolk freeholders, debased by the haughty and inflammatory harrangues of Mr. Coke, has been, and, as years proceed, more and more will be ennobled by the sound, constitutional, unobtrusive sentiments of Mr. Wodehouse.

The Holkham patriot is no man to mince a matter. "Those principles are indeed as different from the language of gentlemen on the other side as liberty is from despotism; as the principles of William were from those of James, but they are such as I shall never shrink from. I am now an old man, and I hope for the benefit of mankind and the liberties of Europe, that they will be those of my descendants."* Truly the liberties of Europe are in a pitiable condition if they need support from the principles of Mr. Coke! For "the benefit of mankind," we, on the contrary, presume to hope that if this gentleman's descendants are rocked in his cradle, and swathed in his bands, and put in his leading-strings, and dandled and cockered up to tread in his steps, the less the county of Norfolk and the kingdom in general know of them the better: for the Whig sentiments of this modern Hampden have seldom answered any end so effectually (whatever end they may have been designed to answer) as to make the subject discontented with his sovereign, the people disaffected towards their rulers, and the ecclesiastical establishment, intended for the security of the state by securing the obligations of all

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

duty, divine and human, an object of distrust with the reflecting and of contempt with the ignorant part of the community. Mr. Coke, who is trumpeted forth by his obsequious admirers as possessing a warm affection towards the church, seldom, indeed, omits an opportunity of convincing us of the nature and extent of this affection. Thus in his tirade on the day of election; advertng to Mr. Brougham's "researches into the state of public charities," he tells us, that "though the bill passed the house of commons, it was returned back from the lords, where, among other peers, it was opposed by some of the bishops."* And, as if this hit was not sufficiently palpable, he subjoins "it was found that charities to a large amount were in the hands of certain great families—a bishop also was possessed of some of them."* These are the specimens (and there are many more in reserve) of Mr. Coke's good will to the church, the proofs of his esteem for the hierarchy of the realm. That the insinuation is treacherous; that it will not probably stand the test of sober examination; and, if it do, ought nothing to affect the general integrity of the established clergy, is little to the purpose. All political treachery seems to lose its nature if it smack but of political utility, or party annoyance. The church receives the wound, and may get rid of the arrow as she can. Upon these slow poisons it is that Mr. Coke, and certain of his partizans, live, and thrive, and swell. On the ejection of these mean and venomous compounds, on all that is gracious and sacred about him, is founded one of his claims upon the good will of the dissenting and republican part of his constituents. For such conduct, had he lived in the times of superstition, I know not how many monasteries he must have founded, or how many penances he must have performed.

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

He lives in better times, and gets off on easier terms. He has only to repeat the offence and brazen out the shame of it. Mr. Glover, in showing the lions on these white-washing occasions, would do well to desist from this sickening part of the ceremony; for so wily and slippery is his great patron in all matters of ecclesiastical polity, that, though he wore the cross on his right shoulder, we should still give him no credit for his attachment to the holy land.

Upon the whole, I do not think that Mr. Coke's *political consistency* can any thing avail him with those who consider soberly the nature of such consistency, that it is, in fact, nothing more than a weak attachment to political folly and a hardened continuance in political guilt.* How far the fame of his *agricultural improvements* may redeem him from this guilt, I will not take upon me to say. The *third edition* of "HOLKHAM, ITS AGRICULTURE, &c." will contribute more to the vindication of Mr. Coke than any thing, I suspect, which has been hitherto written, or spouted in his favour. Dr. Rigby has certainly executed an uncommonly cross-grained task to admiration. He has wrought, like Bernini, upon the hardest marble, and turned it into living flesh. The work will, however, after all, contribute more probably to the doctor's reputation than to the dicta-

* I am called upon here to make one exception. The Rev. Archdeacon Bathurst, at a late celebration of Mr. Coke's birthday, after an appropriate and elegant address from the Rev. Dr. Langton, arose and spoke *substantially* as follows: "Whatever could dignify or adorn human nature might be found in the private character of Mr. Coke, but he thought his political character was an object for even higher commendation; it embraced views as extensive as society itself, and instead of being confined to the mere influence of example, or the benefit of the present times, it might be said to anticipate the prosperity of mankind in general, and of this country in particular, to the latest periods of our posterity."

Norwich Mercury, May 15, 1819.

tor's—for alas! so rooted is his patients' political malady, that, without some philosophical process for taking out old stains that have been worming and eating themselves in for years, I see not how the Ethiopian will be persuaded to “change his skin,” or to exhibit any other than that swarthy, hideous glare, so seriously, at times, alarming to both friends and foes. The mere agriculture of Holkham must have its praise. Indeed I am willing to believe, that we may apply to Mr. Coke and his improvements therein, what, in allusion to those of Rome by Augustus, Johnson applied to the state of poetry under the genius of Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream relinquit* ;* but the politics of Holkham, of so loathsome a cast as to defy being varnished into bearableness by either the classic colouring of Dr. Rigby, or the fulsome flattery of Mr. Glover, will never be any other than what they always have been—the wonder of the county, and its shame.

In the few remarks which I feel called upon to make on “the three proud days of the forty-second anniversary of this most extraordinary and incalculably useful meeting, by far the most interesting and the most brilliant that has yet been recorded,”† I shall be both more concise and less complimentary than the learned doctor, dismissing as rapidly as possible these annual despoliations of taste and genius, with all their adscitious trumpery, in *vicum vendentem thus et odores*.—The *Holkham sheep-shearing*, that celebrated centre towards which all bodies, light

* Mr. Arthur Young, in a letter to the Editor of the Bury Post, seems inclined, however, to make some abatements from Dr. Rigby's full-measure of agricultural praise awarded Mr. Coke. He intimates, that the doctor's pamphlet “would afford matter for observation.” I think so.

See the *Norwich Mercury* of August 2, 1817.

† Holkham, its Agriculture, &c. 3d Edit.

or heavy, equally gravitate—that exhausted receiver in which a leaden bullet and a feather are of the same weight—the Holkham sheep-shearing possesses one advantage, which Dr. Rigby has forgot to notice, of a very peculiar description. It is a field that appropriates itself in a most wonderful manner to versatility of talent. There you behold the genius of our common nature bursting its chains and spreading itself forth in the most appropriate forms—the understanding alternately swelling into its largest capacities and compressed into its very puniest dimensions—this moment exhibiting “all the talents,” and the next shrouding its insufferable superiority under a thick intellectual darkness. Men, in short, no where feel themselves so much men, and capable of tossing and tumbling about their hidden energies as at the celebration of this periodical festivity. For getting upon stilts, and descanting on government in all its diplomacies, they descend, in a twinkling, to “breeding in all its branches”*—from the ministers set fast for want of popularity, they hurry to “the turnips set fast for want of rain”*—from the cause of liberty, civil and religious,”* to “wheat and lavender and Southdowns and merinos”*—and leaving them this minute amid the solemnities of “the temporal and spiritual interests of religious establishments,”* you

* Holkham, &c. and Norwich Mercury and Norfolk Chronicle : I think it proper to refer my readers to each of these sources. For though, (wondering by the bye how Hercules came to bind himself to this distaff) we readily award the palm of superior correctness to the learned doctor, being, like Xenophon and Cæsar, himself a prime actor in the scenes he describes ; yet are these records, upon the whole, more just, perhaps, to the fame of cotemporary genius. One speech, in particular, which at the time was mightily relished, and for its wit and poignancy considered as the first specimen of sheep-shearing eloquence delivered during the “three proud days,” the doctor has not condescended to notice in any other than a most provokingly incidental manner. Alas ! when will envious feelings die in us !

find them the next with Mr. Coke's "wild breed of boars, and a sow of Mr. S. Taylor's."* Truly it is a most admirable "preparatory school" for the young politicians and wool-growers who flock from the four quarters of the kingdom, where nothing is started that is not pursued to its last ramifications, and where men and measures are disposed of with exactly the same facility as beans and barley.

And to see the dignified attitudes, too, of mind that pervade this assemblage of the collected wisdom and worth of the county, and how when their great idol rises to declaim upon the *quid sit turpe* whether pointed at sheep-folds or senates, the little images prepare to fall down and worship, especially when the oracle is delivered from the mouth of the decanter and the response comes shadowed out in the fashion of a toast.† From that sacred store-house of their divinity, the first Pythian breathing delivered was, not according to the good, old-fashioned style in vogue with our forefathers, "king and constitution," but, after the new "radical reform," borrowed from the French revolutionary model, "constitution and king," the *Ego et Rex meus* of one who never suffered his modesty to take precedence of his pride.

* Norfolk Chronicle, July 18, 1818.

† For these toasts see the Norwich Mercury and Norfolk Chronicle of July 11, 1818. Nor must we think lightly of them, for Dr. Rigby has remarked, speaking of Mr. Coke's exertions upon this occasion, (Agriculture of Holkham, p. 85.) "Nor did his labours terminate in the field; it has already been seen that on his return, he only met new duties, in a varied attention to his guests, scarcely less numerous than in the field, and much more concentrated at his tables. It was each day no light effort to select healths and give appropriate toasts, to preface each with apposite remarks, to keep up the attention of so large a company, and even excite in them something like agricultural discussion!" I can easily imagine this. They had had enough of agriculture "in the field;" they wanted a dish of politics over the bottle, and the higher its seasoning, the finer probably the relish of the grape.

“Constitution and king” was therefore drank with profound reverence, and with much more loyalty, we may be assured, than Mr. Conjurer Thiodon could confine within a nut-shell. The next oracular inspiration came loaded with all Arabia Felix, “prosperity to the county of Norfolk, especially the enlightened yeomanry.” The *enlightened* yeomanry, of course, put on their sweetest smile and make their lowest bow. Another inflation follows, and another bit of wisdom is born; “live and let live.” The former part of the response, the Holkham tenantry, with full glasses, echo to the skies; the latter, a mere make-weight in the scale of discretion; they twist their heads over the left shoulder, and pray Jupiter to disperse in air. Again the Pythia becomes distorted, and another bubble instantly makes its appearance; “the clergy of the diocese.”—Yes, “the clergy of the diocese,” given by the dictator of the county! And this calls up the egregious Mr. Glover, (always forward to have a finger in every pie,) in the name, and as the representative of the said clergy, to return thanks for the very especial honour thus graciously conferred upon them. Really, really this is too much. The clergy do indeed bear and bend under many indignities; but to find themselves thus treacherously crowned in these Holkham cups, thus eulogized into infamy by this Holkham political hack, is among the number of their severest, their most nauseating trials.

And this versatility of talent in the field itself has given rise to a correspondent versatility of character in the noble host, who in different situations assumes a different costume, as the celebrated Roscius was occasionally called upon to personate “King Lear” to-day and “Abel Drugger” to-morrow. Thus, meet him at the head of his political sheep-shearers, and it is Mr. Coke of Holkham—catch him in the first circles in town, and it is Mr. Coke of Norfolk. Pop

upon him in the highlands of Scotland, and it is the agricultural hero of the south—accompany him to a political Dereham dinner, and he rises up in the form of a Lacedemonian law-giver. See him in the episcopal palace with “the best shepherd in Christendom,” *nil fuit unquam sic dispar sibi*, and, he is metamorphosed into the guardian of the church and an assertor of the rights of the priesthood! Behold him, finally, haranguing a county meeting in the shire-hall, Norwich, and he dwindles down into the decayed politician, the “lean and slippered pantaloon”—“sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.”*

Whatever may be the advantages of the Holkham mode of agriculture, I confess I see no advantage in these annual Holkham commemorations, where men assemble to display their improvements, to swallow down (a sort of *quid pro quo*) Mr. Coke’s wine and Mr. Coke’s opinions,† and to abuse that government under which they live and thrive, and which protects them, unworthy as they are, in their possessions. Nor is the evil a small one, that even gentlemen, of very different, nay, of nearly opposite political persuasions to Mr. Coke, are sometimes tempted, under the

* Shakespear’s “As you like it.”

† As Rowland Hill once observed in a sermon of his, (the first I ever heard, and the last probably I ever shall hear,) speaking of the various comers and goers of his congregation, who were usually most devout in their admiration of the psalmody, “but they cannot listen to our singing without listening to our *preaching*; we catch’em there;” so neither can the four quarters of the kingdom assemble at the Holkham sheep-shearing without having set before them a dish of the Holkham politics—there is no partaking of the delicacies unless you attend to the oratory. It is a harmonic society, where all that have instruments in tune and musical voices are expected to exert them. Not a string must jar in this “concord of sweet sounds,” with no *crossing of the breed*, this beautiful blinding, of religious, moral, and political, Southdown and Merino passions.

notion that it is illiberal to absent themselves on such narrow grounds, to become his visitors upon these occasions. And though there are instances upon record where they have, some of them, not met with altogether such a reception as they were led to expect, yet such is the good-natured cullability we carry about with us, that Romulus has but to proclaim a feast in honour of Neptune, and his Sabine neighbours will instantly flock to it, in spite of the rape that may be plotted against their political continence. In this focus, the Whig representative and his friends concentrate their agricultural information, their ministerial disaffection, and their ecclesiastical contempts. Here it is that they indulge in their state censures, forgetful, that but for the provident care of those whom they are hourly denouncing as the betrayers of their country, their extensive domains, the *regnum priami vetus*, would long since have been divided into republican dynasties, and wool-growers, and wool-buyers, and butchers, and breeders, with the whole host, noble and ignoble, of idolizers of the house of Holkham, have been all huddled together in one common oblivion. I wish we may not, by and bye, find "the glorious principles for which Hampden fought and Sydney suffered," degenerating throughout the kingdom into those rebellious movements for which Cataline was driven headlong from Rome, and Cæsar lost both his dictatorship and his life. "England's anchor, the hope of the world," heated in the political furnace of our Whig reformers, would never, I fear, come out the precious metal we have hitherto found it. Let the gallant admiral (the right hand of the regent of Norfolk,) in some future contest with the enemies of his country, address his sailors in the language of that gentleman and his co-patriots, and instil into them their principles, their affection for their employers, and the dying declaration of the immortal Nelson, shall never stir a soul among them

more. "England expects every man to do his duty" would only be construed into the duty of every man to withhold as much, and to afford as little assistance as possible to those who were, at that moment, guiding the helm of state, and directing, by their counsels, the very operations that led them on to victory, to fortune, and to fame.

If I made it any part of this Letter to return a regular reply to those remarks in the third edition of "*Holkham, its Agriculture*," which more immediately concern myself, I should do it here. But I have neither the time nor the room, and if I had, the subject would be confessedly out of its place in an address to the freeholders of this nature. Dr. Rigby, of whom my mind carries me to speak in no other than respectful terms, has in this tract descanted, in his usual chaste style, on the merits of Mr. Coke's agricultural labours. I will not say that he has overcharged his picture, but I must be permitted to think that the *genius loci* hath certainly imparted to it a higher finish, than, naturally and divested of extraneous excitements, it would seem to deserve. Of such a production time may, indeed, mellow the colours, but he will never, as Dryden elegantly observed of the portraits of Kneller,—“give more beauties than he takes away.” The policy or impolicy, the advantage or want of advantage, the moral good or evil of such a division of his landed possessions as Mr. Coke has thought proper to adopt, must be left to the general opinion and feeling to decide. It were well if every growing empire could be kept in a due measure of lowliness and industry; if the habits which first made a people great and flourishing could defend them from corruption and decay; and if increasing success, with its concomitant increasing luxury, did not enervate faster than poverty and temperance have invigorated. Measured upon the great scale of kingdoms, or the inferior scale of farms, it is I fear alike certain that

improvements producing plenty and elegance will produce also, and at no very distant period, a state of indolent repose utterly subversive of virtue, and inadequate to the maintenance and continuance of this original creative prosperity. Between covering a nation with large farms and parcelling it out into small ones, there might perhaps, to a reasoning mind, be no choice. The due admixture of both is, I think, the point where all sober opinions would be most likely to meet; where abundance might be compelled to afford us her comforts without their alloys, and where moral habit might be induced to remain with no risk of insult, or injury from vicious indulgences. As to the doctor's remark that the great farmers have "much weight in the political scale of the county," I answer, yes—too much weight if their principles be no better than what they suck in at the Holkham sheep-shearings. Lartius, the dictator, though he struck the people with terror, brought them back to milder feelings and a nobler devotedness to their country. I wish we could say as much for our modern Lartius of Norfolk. But alas! soaking his seeds in a strong political brine, the wheat and the tares generally spring up together, and the husbandman is in danger of housing, at once, both his sheaves and his seditions.

The "agriculture of Holkham" will be read by all who do, and by many who do not think with its author. At once chaste and animated, it will insure attention whether it produce conviction or no. He who is unanswered, it hath been said is unanswerable; but as we are taught to believe that there is now a days "a philosophical indulgence of vanity," I leave the doctor in full possession of the benefit of this somewhat illogical deduction. I am sure from his known meditative habit, he will be very moderate in its use. I look, at any rate, to no abuse of it, until peradventure the arrival of the "three proud days of the

forty-third anniversary," when, if at all, the fascination of circumstances may, for a moment, prevail over "the modesty of nature." We all know the blandishments of these "interesting and brilliant meetings," and as Hannibal melted down his soul in the deliriums of Capua, so may even Doctor Rigby's stoical fortitude, with the *non sum qualis eram* fastening upon every feeling; and reducing the very *O Venus, regina Cnidi, Paphique* to a mere tantalizing shade, be unable to combat the enchantments glowing around him. I cannot, however, but wish, for the credit of his labours, that he had had a more able competitor, and that he had not shewn himself so lost to the soundings and bearings of certain minds as to defend those who were scarcely aware of ever having been attacked.—It is, indeed, searching for laurels in a barren field to expose the errors of a production which, it would seem, Mr. Coke only knew to be in existence from the doctor's remarks upon it.* What then was Mr. Glover's "Reply to a clergyman's letter," dispersed north, east, south, and west throughout the county,

* "Mr. Coke then gave the health of a gentleman, who had, he said, for the first time, done him the honour of attending this meeting; a man whose activity of body and strength of mind were unimpaired, though older than himself, and to whom he felt infinitely obliged for having defended his character from certain aspersions cast upon him by Mr. Burges, in a pamphlet, which, however, he had not condescended to read, except, indeed, such passages as his learned friend had thought proper to comment upon in his amusing work, descriptive of Holkham and its Agriculture, he meant Dr. Rigby, and he should not give him merely as a man, but as a friend." *Holkham, its Agriculture, &c.* p. 48. The report of this allusion of Mr. Coke's to Dr. Rigby's pamphlet, as printed in the Norfolk Chronicle of July 11th, is rather more in point. "Mr. Coke took this opportunity to thank the doctor for the handsome manner in which he had vindicated him against an attack made upon him by the writer of a pamphlet, which pamphlet he had however never seen; but learnt from Dr. Rigby's pamphlet that such an one had lately been published."

unknown to Mr. Coke? Was he honoured with no copy of that inimitable production, which, without being contaminated with a syllable of scurrility itself, so compleatly exposed the scurrility of its opponent, exorcised its imprecations, put to shame its assertions, annihilated its arguments, and set Mr. Coke and his colleagues again upon their legs, thoroughly purged and purified, and more constitutional, more firmly attached to monarchical government, aye, and more seriously devoted to our excellent and blessed church establishment, than they were many of them ever suspected of being in their lives before? Sensitive to the fame of all and every thing about him, how could Mr. Coke be dead to the energies of a man whose political sagacity has already shook our poor crazy administration to atoms, and in whose writings, a perfect world of intellect, he and his Hampden imitables, like straws in amber, are deliciously embalmed for ever? The circumstance is indeed extraordinary!*

* The "*Agriculture of Holkham*" will, I think, serve Mr. Coke's best interest more effectually than either Mr. Glover's oratory, or than even the annual celebrations of his birth-day throughout the county. However, these must, in some measure, be looked upon as decisive of the esteem in which he is held, and perhaps, generally speaking, though set forth with here and there a little too much pomp, they are conducted with sufficient decorum. But an instance lately occurred, where a *Mr. Taylor, of Wymondham*, was chairman, which exhibited a rather striking exception to this decorum. I thought we had boasted of as violent a Taylor at Norwich as in any part of the kingdom; but here, it appears, they have got one of the name quite as violent, and a great deal more vulgar. Indeed he seems better fitted, if the editor has not a little strained the coarseness of his language, to preside over a dinner at St. Giles's, in the metropolis, than at the celebration of Mr. Coke's birth-day. Let these meetings be headed in other places by such men as this Mr. Taylor, of Wymondham, and they will presently become all that Mr. Coke's adversaries can wish them to become; demonstrations of a coarse jacobinical spirit, that will more effectually overthrow his future interest than any present

But the probability of success, had a county contest been persisted in, if it would not have been aided by either Mr. Coke's political consistency, or the hospitalities of Holkham-hall, would, I suspect, have been considerably reduced by the amiable conduct and the strict constitutional principles of Mr. Edmond Wodehouse. That gentleman, scarcely fixed in his seat, the Whig Junto, headed by certain petty partizans who have, it seems, wormed themselves into confidence, were determined if possible to cast out. For this purpose it was that they brought forward, in a sort of mock majesty, and after the universal suffrage idea, "the man of the people," who luckily, however, weighed in the Norfolk freeholder's balance, turned out a mere man of straw. But indeed had Mr. Hamond come forward under better auspices and fairer and fuller hopes, with all the respect attached to his character, it is very unlikely he should have succeeded. Gentlemen, our worthy candidate, Mr. Wodehouse, has answered every expectation that his friends formed of him. He has belied those expectations in, I believe, no one instance. No part of his parliamentary conduct hitherto has been other than he gave us reason to think, and than we, on our part, plainly understood and desired that it should be. The line of that conduct was firmly, impartially, nobly

censures we can bring against him. I trouble not myself to enquire who or what this Mr. Taylor is. He may possibly (for I have no knowledge of Wymondham or its neighbourhood,) be some person there of large landed possessions. From his being called to the chair on so important an occasion he probably is. But surely no dignity of station can apologize for low scurrility of language. In proportion to the exaltation of his rank should have been the urbanity of his demeanor. He should have scorned to adopt a mode of address that, under any circumstances less favourable, would have rather seemed to mark him out for some petty itinerant tradesman than for a resident gentleman of fortune and family.

drawn from the very first, and firmly and nobly has he followed upon it. That he has not therein pleased Mr. Coke's friends is the strongest pledge and demonstration that he has pleased his own. That he has incurred thereby the displeasure of that venerable body, the "White Swan senators," and of every wild and wanton reformer, whether of Whig origin or ultra complexion, is an earnest, deep and grateful, of his having satisfied the friends and admirers of our constitution in church and state, as well as every thoughtful and sober mind in the varied ranks of community. He, therefore, who supported Mr. Wodehouse in his first election, would have felt it his pride and duty to have supported him in his late one, and will, I trust, feel it his increased pride and duty to maintain his future interest in the county. He who voted for him before he was tried, will, with a fuller satisfaction, continue to vote for him after having been tried and found worthy. He, in short, that at his gratifying re-election placed the pink and purple in his bosom, will, in any contest that may hereafter be adventured upon, press these revered colours still nearer to his heart. Indeed one only purpose (and that not of the purest cast) would it seem that any future contest, under existing circumstances, could answer—to harrass Mr. Wodehouse's friends and to distress Mr. Wodehouse's family. But such friends are not lightly to be alarmed by such unworthy devices, nor, fortunately for the peace of the county, are the walls of Kimberly to be shaken without the towers of Holkham trembling to their very base.

Thus far I really think Mr. Wodehouse's triumph, though of a calm and quiet complexion, has been as decisive as possible. It was, as was truly asserted of one of the representatives (Mr. Wilson) for the city of London, "the triumph of character,"* and most

* Star, July 3, 1818.

appositely is it subjoined that "with it any thing might be done, but without it nothing."* Every expedient to injure Mr. Wodehouse has turned out an injury to those only who were mean enough to have recourse to it. Virtue will always find her level amid contending interests. "There is a call upon mankind to value and esteem those who set a moderate price upon their own merits."† It is not in human nature to desert one who appears to possess no confidence but in the justice of his cause and the honour of his constituents. While his haughty rival in the public esteem, proud "even to the altitude of his virtue," invites, nay dares any man to come forward and point out his political errors, Mr. Wodehouse, with far better grounds of hope, deems it more respectful to "challenge no presumptuous inquiry into his conduct."‡ We know that "no interval will ever deaden the impression of his gratitude for the favour he has already enjoyed,"§ and we feel that neither will any interval obliterate the corresponding impression on our minds that he has *deserved* to enjoy that favour. What would become of the return to parliament of our celebrated Whig member had he made the same determination with Mr. Plunkett, the representative for the university of Dublin, "I will not receive the vote of a single individual whose heart is not with me?"|| If all were at liberty to forsake the Holkham standard who do not approve of the Holkham principles, Mr. Coke might be left to fight his electioneering battles with a mere host of Brabancons. When the political character of this gentleman, deformed by the persevering rancour of his opposition, by his narrow prejudiced feelings, his wild

* Star, July 3, 1818.

† Spectator, No. 206.

‡ Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

§ See Mr. Wodehouse's address, Norfolk Chronicle, June 20, 1818.

|| Star, June 29, 1818.

and wanton opinions, his mad party spirit, corrected by no judgment and softened by no consideration, shall no longer be an object of reverence,* Mr. Wodehouse shall feel the rectitude of his own sentiments and the consistency of his own conduct in the growing esteem of those who have witnessed them, and have witnessed them as leading on to the dearest interests not only of the sovereign, but of the subject. He shall live in many a heart when Mr. Coke has lost his hold upon all hearts.

We were told, indeed, by this gentleman on a late occasion, that “he meant to stand alone, but that he could not prevent those of the same principles with himself coming forward for the county.”† How much he wished to prevent them, he nearly in the same breath takes care to inform us. “But such is my desire to see the county of Norfolk represented by Whigs, without which I do not consider it to be represented at all, that I should certainly have given my support to the popular and independent cause of Mr. Hamond.”† Admirable! And so unless the county be represented by men like himself, it is not, it seems, to be considered as represented at all! Why, gentlemen, this is really the very climax of political assurance. That county however desires no greater honour and no greater security, than under such circumstances to continue unrepresented to the last breath of the British constitution. Indeed, with such state physicians, the last breath of the constitution might probably tire no man’s patience to wait for.—With such principles as Mr. Coke and his Whig associates are known to advocate, they will have no

* I would have those who go round like bell-men crying up Mr. Coke’s principles and popularity in the county, to recollect the state of the poll, as to the number of single votes, in the election for the year 1802, Astley 70—Coke 159—Wodehouse 2794!

† Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

occasion to copy the disinterestedness of Mr. Orator Hunt, and to make a solemn covenant before the Mayor of Norwich, that "they will never suffer themselves to be made either dukes, privy counsellors, field marshals, archbishops, or lord chancellors."*

In any future contest for the representation of the county, where Mr. Coke may be smit with the presumption of bringing in another member cut out precisely after his own fashion, he will, I suspect, have an Herculean task of it. He will have, as Mr. Bruce observed of Sir Francis Burdett, "to contend against all the arts of government, all the expedients of corruption," and, what is often with considerable difficulty overcome, "the influence of many of the fair sex."† And if, "in spite of the threats of power and the seductions of beauty," † he can still manage to carry a brace of Whig representatives, he must possess some means of persuasion and placidity which neither friends nor foes have ever yet, I believe, given him credit for. What popular enthusiasm, often an honest fool, may in future do in his favour, I am not able to say. "Reform (as we were lately told) had seemed so elated with what she had done with the election of Wood, Waithman, and Thorp, and with the triumph which she was about to obtain in Westminster, by the election of her favourite child and champion, Sir Francis Burdett—she seemed so elated with these triumphs, that in a frolic, in a playful mood, she said, let us elect honest Tom Clarke."‡ And it is possible reform may be so tickled too with her miraculous Norwich triumphs, as, by and bye, to consent to elect, as his colleague for the county, Mr. Coke's honest game-keeper, or whipper in, or cleaner of

* Norwich Courier, June 20, 1818.

† Star, July 3, 1818.

‡ Ibid, June 27, 1818.

his kennels, or any other Whig urchin of the same description, who will follow upon his master's track, snuff the ministerial scent, and, whether in couples or with the pack in full cry, hunt down the Tory game wherever he can come at it.

Though, however, I believe the season to be past for their looking from the towers of Holkham for the laureated letters from Norwich—though I think that no shouts of county victory will, for a considerable time to come, greet those lonely and desolate walls, yet let it not hence be inferred that we deem Mr. Coke in danger, or deserving of general desertion.—No—while he has a foot to stand on, while a spark of real patriotism and devotion to the house of Hanover remains about him, let him be supported. The county of Norfolk has indeed little to boast of, independent of his respected name and family, by his representation of it, but, in times like the present, we see the possibility of its having still less. The Westmorland election has opened a door to all sorts of customers, nor is it certain that they may not send us over a supply of their own wares, and colonize the county with new Hunts and Hobhouses, under the patronage of the blue and white interest of the city of Norwich.—In such a city such auxiliaries will never be unwelcome, and the clerk of the democratic course will thus be enabled to furnish out a list of candidates, receiving their credentials from the forged signatures of some White Swan senate, all flaming hot with the republican spirit and ready to start for the representation at four and twenty hours' notice.

I am glad to find, and I can readily believe, that the late "contest for Westmorland, between Lord Lowther and Mr. Brougham, was a contest of *principles*, not of men,"* and I wish, gentlemen, that all

* Star, July 8, 1818.

future contests for our own county may be of the like distinguishing description, and that wherever such principles as Mr. Brougham's obtrude themselves, however sanctified by talent, however palliated by professions, however qualified or intended to operate, they may meet with the same hearty reprobation, and be considered, as there is every reason to apprehend they will turn out, as the seeds and rudiments of rebellion scattered up and down the country under the pernicious notions of reform. Men of this political stamp and character bid fair to become the deepest stains upon her national glory that England was ever blasted with. With, I am willing to believe and hope, a wild uprightness in their views, an undefined respect for the constitution in their parliamentary discussions and their popular appeals, I can yet only behold them in the wretched effects of such appeals, congregating their living energies with the departed ashes of the Cæsars and Syllas of Rome; the Dantons and Robespieres, and Marats of France. That Mr. Brougham was thrown out for Westmorland will give satisfaction to every man who does not think with Mr. Coke of Norfolk. There is, in fact, but one satisfaction we could have had above it, to have found that he had been thrown out for every place, and that even the rotten boroughs, as a heavy loathsome drug, had cast him up again. That he was "defeated on ground, where, if he had been believed, victory was in his grasp e'er the battle began,"* will surprise those only who are strangers to the spirit of his politics and ignorant of the weakness of his presumption.

Before I bid adieu to this local department of my subject, I must beg leave, gentlemen, to advert to a peculiar species of delusive effrontery on the part of our county and city members, and which they have

* Star, July 6, 1818.

played off upon their adherents with the utmost coolness imaginable, and with, probably, no mean portion of success. Some assurance it certainly requires to go boldly into our neighbour's field and reap the grain which his care and industry have produced, and fairly carry it home and house it in our own barns. But in the shuffling politics of this wayward world there is no getting on, it seems, without assurance, as a certain travelling apostle of Norfolk Whig liberty, more efficacious than precept, frequently teaches us by his example. The regent's speech on the 10th of June, 1818, was read, at the time, by every true patriot with the full glow of satisfaction, but with contempt for the sagacious prophesiers of our ruin. "I cannot (says he) refrain from adverting to the important change which has occurred in the situation of this country and of Europe, since I first met you in this place.—At that period the dominion of the common enemy had been so widely extended over the continent, that resistance to his power was by many deemed to be hopeless; and in the extremities of Europe alone was such resistance effectually maintained.—By the unexampled exertions which you enabled me to make, in aid of countries nobly contending for independence, and by the spirit which was kindled in so many nations, the continent was at length delivered from the most galling and oppressive tyranny under which it had ever laboured; and I had the happiness, by the blessing of divine providence, to terminate, in conjunction with his Majesty's allies, the most eventful and sanguinary contest in which Europe had for centuries been engaged, with unparalleled success and glory."* Lord Castlereagh too, on a later occasion, taking a view of the return of the country since peace to a state of renewed comfort and prosperity, "contrasted

* Norwich Mercury, June 13, 1818.

the time when he last visited that country with the present. The country, he observed, was then in the utmost distress, owing to the recurrence from a state of war to that of peace, for we had been engaged in a contest for our very existence as a nation; and in that contest Great Britain had triumphed, and crowned herself with glory. Providence, however, then, in order to check our exultation, had visited us with a most inclement season: he recollected, in a particular manner, that the wheat on a farm which was occupied by his father was covered with snow. Now the contrast was most grateful, and it was his hope that prosperity would again visit the land. Nothing could exceed the beautiful verdure of that happy country, and he could assure them it was not confined to that country, for it was general. Arts and manufactures also were again flourishing, and all was one active scene of employment.”* And do our Whig opponents, whose counsels would have ruined every thing, and whose principles would have turned us into little short of a nest of jacobins, do they now come forward and claim, as the effect of those counsels, this improved state of things, produced by acting firmly in direct opposition to them? Do they come forward and inlist on their own side, and endeavour to turn to their own advantage, what the spirit, and wisdom, and virtue of administration so ably wrought for us? Do they dare, in the very face of the sun, to steal our arms to fight their own ignominious battles with, and for their preservation from ruin evince their gratitude by stinging their deliverers to the quick?

Yes—upon the foundations an upright and most efficient administration have laid, they erect their battery against us. To the very wealth of the nation did Mr. William Smith, in his late contest, impute

the increased independence of the city of Norwich. And who created this wealth, and how has it been attained? Under the auspices of that very government which Mr. Smith's partizans were daily denouncing. Ministers had told us to be patient and we should see England revive. They told us this at the close of a glorious but gigantic war that had torn our sinews, and shattered our nerves, and worn down our strength, but nothing abated of our spirit. They told us this, freeholders, when the Whig leaders of our own and of other counties, followed by the whole rabble rout of Jacobin orators and inflamers throughout the kingdom, were moving heaven and earth to make the people believe that their destruction was sure and sealed, that all was over with us, and that nothing was left, as our last resource, but an immediate extirpation of the ministry and a thorough reformation of the state; in other words, I presume, adapting these stale phrases to the new vocabulary of their new colleagues—a revolution! But, lo! and behold, according to their own concessions, how is this dark prophecy fulfilled? About this city—recollect, gentlemen, it is not my Lord Castlereagh, but Mr. William Smith, the dissenting member for Norwich, that is speaking:—"About this city he saw new houses building, he heard looms working, and it was not now, who should obtain employment, but where to obtain workmen; the demand for manufactures was immense, and it arose either from the wants of the public at home or from foreign trade; this it was which would diffuse that universal content, and peace, and ease, which commerce invariably bestows."*

Let us take another example of blue and white Whig consistency. "Mr. Coke then came forward and said, that he was glad to observe the alteration

* *Norwich Mercury*, June 20, 1818.

which had taken place in the sentiments of the people. It was, he maintained, a change produced by the return of peace, which had had the effect of placing the middling classes of society in comparative independence, and thereby enabling them to think and act for themselves."* And who, gentlemen, who effected this peace which had thus wrought so great and good a change? The counsels of Mr. Coke and his party? the conduct of Mr. Coke and his party? the constitutional principles of Mr. Coke and his party? So far from it, that had that conduct, those counsels and those principles been closely followed up and firmly acted upon by a blue and white majority throughout the kingdom, the British house of parliament might by this have been turned into a republican assembly, and the established church, shorn of its revenues, liberalized into a dissenting conventicle. Almost out of their own mouths we condemn them. What could the most determined supporters of a court party say more in defence of the measures of the late administration than is implied in such confessions? What could we say more in condemnation of their duplicity, their treachery, their principles, leading year after year to discontent and disobedience, and now that peace with its concomitant blessings were restored, representing these blessings as the effects of their rancorous and disgraceful opposition? Yes, freeholders, carefully treasure up in your recollection that these *were* the men, who, in the midst of an exterminating war, when life, and liberty, and honour, and all were at stake, clamoured for peace and obstructed, by their opposition, every measure for the security of the empire—these *were* the men, who, when a glorious peace was accomplished, amid such a solemnity of success as the

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 20, 1818.

annals of no nation in the records of time ever before boasted, reverted, like idiots, to the losses we had sustained, and by their seditious harrangues inflamed the populace to madness, even in the full blaze of our national glory—and now these *are* the men, that, when in consequence of this peace, England was beginning to breathe, and commerce to revive, and agriculture to stand on a firmer basis, and plenty once more to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked—these *are* the men, that, with dauntless unabashed brow, stand up and address you from their popular thrones, and on the very foundation of this returning national prosperity which they never, in one instance, aided, but uniformly by their dark, dull, heavy denunciations thwarted and opposed—on, I repeat, this sacred ground, tainted by their very touch, have they the temerity to erect their claims to public favour and gratitude! All that has been accomplished for the salvation of the country, not only without any succour from them, but in the very teeth of their insults, their calumnies, their obstructions, do they take as it were to themselves, and, such is their reliance upon popular credulity, impudently build upon as if—positively as if *they* had accomplished it!! I forbear to reflect further upon such gross violations of political honesty, such evanescent instruments of political popularity. I leave the business in good hands—I leave it to your reflection; certain that it will find its way to your contempt.

Having thus at length, gentlemen, “escaped the Stygian flood,” and got out of the stench and smoke of the city doings and the county contrivances, let us enter upon a larger field, where we can throw off the shackles of local politics, and expand our thoughts in investigations of a more general nature, of a finer soul, and of a fuller and more efficient tendency. It is not indeed, as you will perceive, for any present purpose, for the sake of serving any peculiar isolated

interest; that I address this Letter to you ; for I have suffered time to elapse and all such interest, in a good measure, to die away. But I have written it on the ground that the country is in great and imminent danger, and that this danger ariseth from the prevailing temper and spirit of the times ; and that even with every man of property and respectability on the side of government, instead of being, as they many of them are, unnaturally leagued against it, it would be sufficiently alarming and difficult to contend with. You will consider these reflections then as a guide, I hope not a presumptuous one, and persuasive to your future conduct, and not to your's only, but to the conduct of every freeholder throughout the kingdom ; that looking upon "the signs of the times," and the conjunction of circumstances, and the systematic arrangement of every instrument, moral and political, for the bringing about the grand crisis of "radical reform," (the modern unalarming term for revolution) you may hold fast to those principles, civil and religious, which have made us the great nation we are, and oppose with firmness every endeavour to seduce you from your duty, whatever may be the rank, the character, or the professions of such seducers.

In the first place then, and as preparatory to all discussion as well as to all steady exertion, let us, gentlemen, entertain right notions of what are called *politics* and *party spirit*, and how far we may speculatively engage in the study of the one, and suffer ourselves with credit to be practically influenced by the other. *Politics* must not be scorned. It is a high and holy part of Ethics, and, in its influential consequences, is second only to religion. Much of man's moral conduct will be found to depend on the form of government under which he lives, on the laws he is called upon to observe, on the duties he is expected to fulfil, and on the rights he is permitted to

enjoy. It is not politics, but what people are accustomed to call by that staled name, what they understand by the term in its idle or abused sense, and what designing men take in any sense that serves their selfish, or ambitious, or unjust purposes, that is worthless as a science. But the true policy of a state; what is it but a knowledge and adaptation of the best laws for its government, and of the best means for the perfection and conservation of those laws; what is it but an endeavour to assimilate the power and dignity of the sovereign with the security and liberty of the subject, and so to assimilate them, that any prerogative stretched too far on the one side shall be met and modified by some opposing right on the other; any right too vehemently insisted upon by the people, shall find its best refutation in some correspondent and balancing duty. What, in short, is politics stript of its vulgar trappings, its servile debasements, but an illustration and enforcement of the welfare, springing from the virtue of man in all his capacities, civil, social, and domestic?

Evil disposed men, and men of weak and vain tempers, have long been politicians in the worst sense of the word; and why, therefore, may not the honest and thinking part of community be such in the sounder and better sense. He who asks what a plain man, or a freeholder attached to his King and country, has to do with politics, may as well ask what he has to do with good government, good laws, proper wholesome submission, virtuous discipline, all of which tend to the advancement of Christianity; are built upon the foundation of Christianity; do add to the credit and strength of Christianity; and, by rendering man obedient to "the powers that be" at present, best fit him for communion with the powers that shall be hereafter. If we feel it any portion of our duty to enforce the obligations of religion, (particularly of "that pure

and reformed part of it to which we belong,") it is surely no less a duty to imbibe and recommend such political principles as are adapted to second and sanction such obligations. It is no condemnation of public freedom to restrain brutal minds from the attack of all that ought to be held sacred. It is no slur on public liberty to draw the sword against those who, by their gross abuse of it, turn all liberty into licentiousness. It is no injury to pure religion or sound philosophy to expose the seceders from the one, the puny, mischievous pretenders to the other, nor any discredit to those who stand up for church and state, to subvert, to denounce, to drive into utter darkness and despair the demagogues who, under fair names but foul demeanours, are moving heaven and earth to tear church and state, government, civil and ecclesiastical, to pieces. The discredit is, with all things in commotion about us, to stand lost, unreflecting, indecisive.

For my own part, though some of my clerical brethren, from motives perfectly conscientious and honourable, may herein, perhaps, not be altogether disposed to accord with me, I take no shame from engaging in the political discussions of the day, when I recollect the awful grounds of our contest, and the duty of every man, both in the house of God and out of it, to "refrain not to speak when there is occasion to do good." A clergyman in this respect stands, I conceive, in the same situation with other men. He must do what he can for his religion, for his church, and for that upon which both are so immediately dependant, his government. From the pulpit, indeed, he can politically do little or nothing. He is restrained; he is awed. "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." In the church, only the voice of God must be heard, only the mediation of his divine son must be recollected; only the breathings of his divine spirit must be felt. In the church we must shut out the world; the vain and empty contentions

and ambitions of the world. All that makes up the pomp and pride of life must be suffered to go out in darkness, and a new world must be opened to our inspection, a new and awful world, where other forms of being await us, and unknown solemnities rush upon our souls. There, discarding the evanescent concerns of mortality, we are to have "our conversation in heaven," and, with holier feelings and higher powers in prospect, to forget the feelings and renounce the powers by which we are influenced upon earth. It is from the press alone that we may speak of what appertaineth merely to "the smoke and stir of this dim spot;" nor, through this medium, will it contaminate either our profession, or the more spiritual grounds of it, to vindicate from the aspersions of unjust men the established government under which we live, and the established church whose more immediate ministers we are. I am sure none are more interested in the preservation of a monarchical government than the clergy of the church of England. They are the first men that would suffer by its demolition, and ought, therefore, to be the first to move in its support, and the last that under any, the most deplorable, reverses should consent to forsake it. There was a time, gentlemen, and in our own recollection, when the clergy took up arms, other than spiritual, in defence of the establishment in church and state. It was an awful time, and there might be no need of a precedent for such a conduct. Let us however be consistent. May we not take up the pen as well as the sword? May we not take it up when so many are employing it, and with such acrimony, against us? May a clergyman be a soldier, a farmer, a magistrate, but on the subject of politics, that pledge of our orthodox religion, that bond of our common happiness, that security of our social complicated interests, not dare to utter a syllable? What arguments, I beseech you, can they alledge against the latter avocation, which may

not, with redoubled force, be brought against the former?

I rest in the conclusion then that politics, with the clergy as well as with the laity, is a lawful study, that it is a useful study, that it is a righteous study, being a perpetual exercise of our judgment, a perpetual incentive to our virtues, and a perpetual call upon our duties. An almost perfect impeccability, indeed, runs through every vein of it. On the subject of *party spirit* (to borrow a known term) it may be necessary to treat somewhat more at large, both because it is of a less defined nature, and because common opinion, ignorantly taken up, hath stamped it with meaner compliances and grosser culpabilities. Party spirit, as I understand and feel it, has, in fact, nothing at all to do with party. It is the warm adoption and defence of what we deem the most efficacious measures, accordant with the purest principles of our constitution, for the general good of the community. Such party spirit is never to be despised, because it buildeth upon public welfare, and evermore directs its exertions through staid and legal channels. It is a spirit not attached to any particular set of men, to any particular set of measures, to any particular executive administration, but coalescing with such men and such measures as evidently intend, and are directed to the good of the whole. We call it indeed (for we must have a name for every thing,) party spirit; but it is the spirit of virtue seeking and holding communion with congenial tempers, and gathering up from every quarter, from the nobles of the land to the little freeholder and the poor cottager, materials for the public weal and securities for the public tranquillity.

Without, however, too much generalizing this idea, and to bring the business home to our bosoms at once, the party spirit, gentlemen, to which I would urge you on the present occasion, is a spirit strongly attached to our venerable institutions in church and

state, strongly opposed to the miscreant spirit which is abroad and seeking their destruction. Be not ashamed ; such party spirit is now your glory. Be not alarmed ; such party spirit is now your refuge. Enter the field boldly against your desperate adversaries, or never enter it at all. If you come into the present contests of the times without party feeling, and a high party feeling too, you come into an aceldama prepared to lay your neck upon the next block. It is not Sir Frances Burdett, or Mr. Hobhouse, or the Whigs of Westminster, or the Whigs of Norfolk, miserable and mischievous as are their politics, that are the primary objects of alarm with thinking minds. It is the hordes of radical reformers, the revolutionary banditti dispersed through every quarter of the kingdom, that are looking up to their conduct to see how far they may dare to go in their own. I care not how fair some of these gentlemen may stand in private estimation ; the fairer the worse, for all their unhappy virtues will be brought into the field against their country. It is this that makes the highest party feeling on our side the highest praise.—It is this that makes it our duty, in the spirit of such feeling, to condemn the Whig politics of the present day, as we would execrate those principles that go to the overthrow of all order and happiness in the community.

Not that we would permit no investigation of the measures of government, no opposition to legislative authority, be it employed in what reprehensible manner it may. It is only our adversaries that charge us with such feelings of undue submission, such an exemplification of the slavish spirit of party. It was well observed upon a late occasion by my Lord Castlereagh, (a name high in the esteem of honourable minds, though detested by many of the ranker adversaries to whom we are opposed) that “ It was only by the honest conflict of opinions that

truth was elicited. It would be impossible for the most enlightened cabinet to govern a nation without an honest conflict of opinions."* To this point, gentlemen, our excellent constitution suffers, nay even enjoins us to go. And here if this conflict stopped all would be well; the air would be cleansed, the political atmosphere ventilated, and purer skies and softer gales would succeed. There is a rational liberty for which it behoves every man to contend. There is a wild blasting licentiousness, against which it becomes every man to protest. There is a ministerial corruption to which no man, be he of what party he may, should disgracefully bow. There is a popular corruption to which, if we bow, our disgrace will be our lightest punishment. There is, finally, a mean neutrality, a poor base prostration of judgment, which tells us that a man has no soul, and scarcely any but a set of half formed, hide and seek principles, evermore controlled by the stronger feelings of his interest. Such are not the men for the present moment. Such are not the minds to be imbued with the party spirit we are recommending. They must be suffered to rest in their ignominy, in that cool, calculating, heartless indifference which is content to see every thing going wrong and ingloriously to sit still and assist in nothing. Their country will owe them no recollections of fondness whether she stand or fall.

Few reflecting men can go through life without some suspicion of change in their political sentiments. In a nation like our own, there is, perhaps, hardly the possibility of being, and, at the same time, seeming to be consistent, unless the frame of government, like the sun in the firmament, could travel through the

* See his Lordship's address to the freeholders of the county of Down, Star, July 8, 1818.

revolutions of time without concussion from the surrounding elements. There are periods in our history when the prerogatives of the crown needed curtailment. There are other periods when the aristocracy was gaining too much upon us, and others, again, when the democratical part of the constitution was bearing down with a force too preponderating the balance of power opposed against it. A wise man, under the operation of these varying emergencies, will see his wisdom in a skilful appreciation of contending difficulties, and in acting accordingly. He will be there with his best counsels and his steadiest defence, where, for the time, the greatest danger lies brooding, and will despise the idle imputation of a change in sentiment, because at one period he discerns the necessity of supporting the prerogative, at another of standing up for rank and property, and afterwards, when monarchy and aristocracy are making fearful head in the state, for altering his political attitude and vindicating in the same spirit, though circumstances have changed the course of its direction, the constitutional rights, the constitutional privileges, the constitutional freedom and happiness of the people. In all these situations he is the same man, the same political character, and with a soul composed of the very same political stuff.

When Mr. Burke, in the year 1772, defended the dissenters from our establishment, and, at a more advanced period, ceased to defend them, will any one say, considering the great and awful changes in the times, and the changes almost as great in the demands of the dissenters themselves, that he could fairly be charged with inconsistency? When again Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and other eminent men withdrew from the Whig club in the beginning of the year 1793, on a resolution passed by that club approving of Mr. Fox's sentiments on the French revolution, and indirectly censuring the opinions of those

who differed with that great man, did any one, save the members of that association, attach blame to their conduct? No—they believed the Whig club (with too much reason as it afterwards appeared,) to be entertaining opinions inconsistent with the honour and security of the kingdom; and, though with much veneration for many individuals among them, instantly erased their names from the society. They ceased to be members because they had no desire to cease to be Englishmen.

Let us not then, gentlemen, be deterred at the imputation of forsaking our party, or of changing our principles. It is no dishonour, but a proof of large virtue to reconsider our course of conduct when we feel or fear that we are going wrong, and when dangerous times may induce us to aid the government we had been in the habit of opposing. When the French revolution burst forth, almost all parties, it will be recollected, rallied round the throne, and we now see that it was well for them and their country that they were wise in time. Besides, if the men with whom we are acting are attempting to mislead us, our only chance of escape is to discard such guides and to look out for better. We may be canvassing speculative points of government with the best intentions; we may be contemplating the measures of government with the purest views to their correction and amendment, but these traitorous colleagues may be all the while holding communion with the darkest thoughts, conceiving the darkest plans, giving life to the darkest attempts, and triumphing secretly in the success of every measure that has for its implied, though not perhaps its avowed object, the destruction both of our civil and of our religious establishment. Now though great minds have, generally speaking, no animosity beyond the line of their political dissensions, and as proofs of which we may adduce the reciprocal ties of good will between Lord North and

Mr. Burke, even in the height of a most virulent opposition during the American war, and the suavity of Mr. Fox's temper, which formed him for coalescence with his illustrious rival, Mr. Pitt, whenever coalescence came within the verge of possibility; yet where men are decidedly revolutionists in their sentiments, their language, their conduct, the very same duty that, under other circumstances, would urge us to a reciprocation of civilities, must here abstract us from every shadow of friendly regard. When such characters intrude themselves, whether with or without a mask, they must engage every man's eye and no man's heart. Where the destruction of their country, thinly veiled under the varied pretences of reform, is the first thing such mischievous spirits seek, the reprobation of so infamous a conduct should be the first, and last, and only thing we must permit ourselves to feel.

Party spirit, gentlemen, is virtuous, and will continue virtuous so long as it makes the public good its undeviating object, amid the deviations therefrom by which it is surrounded. But there is a party spirit too that is adverse to all connection with virtue, one certain mark of which is a uniform, systematic opposition to the measures of government, be they of what nature or tendency they may. Opposition to the measures of administration is not to be lightly censured. A well governed and well grounded opposition we are rather disposed to consecrate. It is formed for the production of the tranquillity and happiness of the realm, it is persisted in for their improvement, and when that improvement is secured, it receives its crown and reward. But a vexatious opposition is of a quite different complexion, springing from no principle of good, nor intended to insure any such principle. It sets out with loose, narrow, shameful views. Every step it takes is taken at the expence of political integrity. Every vote it gives it gives to the annoy-

ance of such integrity. Its motives, its means, and its ends are all of the same dye, and parts of the same woof. Who suffers, or what suffers, or to what extent the suffering may reach, is neither calculated upon nor cared for. These men, if their strength could become their law, would remove the everlasting mountains, that the world might behold them perched on the top of their own contemptible molehills.—Nothing is too exorbitant for the ambition of their little souls, nor can any national evil be considered as alarming that has a tendency to undermine a reigning ministry, or to advance their own frequently ridiculous pretensions.

Men of this character, who seek the establishment of their private views, and will, if possible, carry it through all checks of honour or conscience, are very likely to attempt to do that which reason will convince them they can never do. There is no giving up the mind in political warfares to an uniform pursuit, to a uniform set of opinions, to a uniform revilement or vindication of ministerial measures. Justice knows nothing of such a monstrous procedure, virtue abhors it. How can an honest man systematically defend all legislative enactments alike? How can he alike oppose all legislative enactments? What benefit is there in so preposterous a conduct—what credit? It is a waste of intellect, a sacrifice of reputation, an unpardonable forgetfulness of the naturally infirm, changeable, and suspicious bearings of every human mind, however eminent, when modified or operated upon by circumstances. A strong party spirit indeed, adverse alike to every measure of administration because it originates with administration, is a nuisance, and must involve public affairs in ruin if it be suffered to draw upon the approbation of the country. Strong and headlong party feelings approach to the nature of civil war, relaxing all the bonds of brotherhood, all the ties of courtesy that bind together the various

casts in a well ordered society. Strong party feelings against government, uncalled for by a commensurate necessity, are enmities against the state, are incentives to disobedience, and corrupt the moral impressions of our nature to an alarming degree. They make us wish to find in our adversaries the defects we are anxious to discover in them. They go even further, they unsettle our notions of right and wrong, and actually render us the offenders against virtue which we often only affect to consider them. I do not wish these men the punishment of Marsyas,* though their crimes certainly more than equal his. But I wish them to consider, that the perpetually brooding over disaffection and sedition will have a strong tendency to render them disaffected. The mind may accidentally entertain, but does not naturally dwell upon that to which it has an aversion. There is no constant meditation but upon subjects of desire.

There may be, and frequently are, feelings of honor in individuals of the most violent and factious parties; but these feelings are overpowered by a more deep and congregated interest for the success of their plans, to insure which they disregard every motive that ought to sway men to an equitable conduct, and even to a patriotic demeanour. Who will say that the eloquence of Mr. Burke was well employed, when, in speaking of Ireland in the year 1783, he observed, "why have not the ministry adopted the same measures respecting Ireland as they did respecting America? Why have they not treated Dublin as they treated Boston? Why have they not shut up the port of Dublin, burnt Cork, reduced Waterford to ashes?

* Marsyas dreamt that he had cut Dionysius's throat. (Plutarch). Dionysius put him to death, pretending that he would never have dreamt of such a thing by night if he had not thought of it by day.—Spirit of Laws, vol. 1, 274.

Why have they not prohibited all popular meetings in that kingdom and destroyed all popular elections? Why have they not altered the usual mode of striking juries, as was done by the Massachusetts Bay Charter Bill? Why were not the Dublin rioters brought over to this country to be tried by an English jury? Why were not the principal leaders of the Irish armed associations proscribed, and the whole kingdom declared to be in rebellion?—The answer was plain and direct; the ministry dare not.* Who does not see that such a speech was inflammatory in all its bearings, and that if the Irish were not driven by the force of it to insurrection and rebellion, it was none of Mr. Burke's fault. In fact, that conduct which, in their domestic transactions, men would not bear to be thought guilty of, they are sometimes well nigh ashamed in their political corporate capacity, to be suspected of not being guilty of, so powerful is virtue in the one case, so miserably helpless and without all weight or influence in the other!

Carry your recollection, gentlemen, through the various measures of the various administrations in this country, from the period of the revolution down to the present time, and you will find that, let those administrations have been of a Whig or of a Tory complexion—let such a man as Fox have stamped upon them the greatness of his soul, or such a minister as Pitt have consecrated or confounded them by the wisdom of his foresight, there is, at least, (either party being judge) as many of those measures entitled to the common praise as to the common censure, as many as were considered as redounding, at the time, to the good, as to the injury of the nation. But, this allowed as the fact, (and I see not how it can with any impartiality be denied) how, I beseech you, freeholders of

* Annual Register, 1780.

Norfolk, that we may bring the matter to our own thresholds, how stands the case, in this particular, with our admired Whig member, Mr. Coke? What has been the line of his opposition to government for the many parliaments in which you have returned him as your representative? Has it been marked, as all strong opposition ought, by a uniform adherence to political virtue and wisdom? Has he, at all times, reasoned with his mind before he consented to commit his judgment? Has he considered, that as no administration was ever known to have been uniformly corrupt, so none, on any principle of justice, any commonly received maxim of doing unto others as we would be done by, can be uniformly opposed and condemned? Alas! to his own mind he seems never to have put a single question of the kind! He seems never even so much as to have pretended to the shadow of moral casuistry upon the measures of government. Right or wrong, wise or foolish, virtuous or divested of all virtue, those measures have alike found him their determined adversary. In other words, and referring to the necessary complexion of the acts of every administration, he has rushed furiously forward and opposed all that wise men would call wise, all that good men would call virtuous, merely because those measures originated with senators who were not, Providence be praised, of the same constitutional cut and cast with himself. . And does Mr. Coke call this parliamentary independence? It is a base slavishness to his passions; a murder of independence, body and soul; a sacrifice of those honourable feelings that sway him in his domestic relations to his political ambitions, and which, under any other state of society than the present, any less powerful interest than his large landed possessions, would, I am persuaded, disqualify him for ever sitting in parliament more, or for ever more disgracing a British senate with such unworthy and revulsionary feelings. This gentleman has taken an un-

happy course. The fair progress of his life was before him, as his literary friend, Dr. Rigny, has elegantly intimated, in making "the barren wilderness to smile around." But he hath chosen to build his fame on another foundation; on a foundation which is gradually mouldering away under the power of time, and which has all the emptiness, without any of the grandeur, of its dilapidations.

It is not then, gentlemen, recollect a proper party spirit that we need any of us be ashamed of, neither is it any varying application of that spirit that should give us a moment's uneasiness; for seasons and circumstances may so work as to render sometimes the support, sometimes the rejection of certain measures most eligible. There is not only a foreign, but a domestic balance of power that must be preserved, and this can alone be done by observing where the danger at any particular period hinges, and there guarding against it even by a temporary dereliction of our staid and more permanent feelings. All this while, I humbly conceive, we may preserve not only our political principles, but our political independence.—A truly independent mind will not scorn all obligation, but will hold fast to the line of its duty amid every versatile bearing of either gratitude or interest. It is well to avoid the yoke and burthen of obligation as much and as often as we can; but there are many situations we are compulsatorily thrown into where that "yoke is easy," and that "burthen is light." Let me know my man, and I will soon tell you whether and how far he shall bind me. If he seek to engage me in a good cause and with good and righteous views, I will endure obligation and feel the better, the prouder, the more independent for it. It is a sacrifice that I dare to offer in the face of heaven without fearing the frown of heaven. Obligations conferred upon us by the virtuous only bind us the faster to virtue. Instead of depressing they

elevate the soul ; instead of debasing they ennoble our principles ; instead of lowering us in our own estimation, they exalt us in the estimation of those about us. Such obligations find us free, and they leave us so. They require nothing from us but what we were previously disposed to do. They abridge not an atom of our liberty, they merely enlarge the sphere of its exertion. They enable us to work upon a larger scale, to act in a fairer field, to cope with a fuller force, and to contend with a higher spirit.

Surely there is something fixedly illiberal in giving credit to no man for either honest or honourable feelings, who, in an hour of danger, defends an established government and administration. It is, I know, difficult to divest a strong party feeling of occasional undue partiality. But few willingly commit their judgment by lavishing applause at random or disgrace their integrity by a voluntary renunciation of it. In nothing more apparent is the injury resulting from an unprincipled party spirit, than in our lack of honorable feeling one towards another, where a man's public conduct is decidedly unsuspicious. We can afford to let the ages of chivalry, all bright with glozing virtues, pass into oblivion ; but we cannot afford to part with this remnant of ancient days, by which men are bound more strongly together than by religious creeds or human laws, and carried further on in a right conduct than by the persuasions of reward or the threats of punishment. Honour is indeed not integrity, nor ability, nor rank, nor influence, and yet it is very intimately allied to them all. There is not a brother, or sister of this fair family that is not proud to acknowledge her as a relation. Drive honor from the human mind and what becomes of virtue ; what becomes of the grace and polish of society which makes it, in spite of the rudeness of its surroundings, so fascinating to man, and which balances by its blessings the cares that corrode and the slanders that disgust his soul?

Honor will do for some men what nothing else will. When all calls of duty, all feelings of interest, all ties of blood and friendship, nay even all appeals to conscience have failed to move, honor tracks the heart through her hidings, and brings her home, and exhorts, rebukes, compels to a decorous conduct.

There is I know not what of a sublime betokening in this sacrifice of our baser passions at the shrine of an imaginary, airy being. There is a witching sweetness in this ideal substitute for the absence of solid virtues, this silken thread which binds together all the social affections, all the comforts and amities of domestic life; and, properly cultivated, there is something too in the mind of man wonderfully wrought up and prepared for the reception of this noble quality. It is a soil indeed full of weeds, and rank garniture, and unsightly elements, and naturally productive of "all monstrous, all prodigious things." But a seed is sown in it, by an invisible hand, that occasionally produces a rich harvest, and converts the wilderness into fine pastures, and still waters, and awful solitudes that tell us God has been here and mixing his spirit with the vile and loathsome clay. We can do without any thing, gentlemen, better than without honourable feelings one towards another, while such feelings can with any degree of propriety be cherished. When that spell is broken every prospect is involved in darkness, and every fellow creature's virtue lies useless, or dead at our feet.

Though, however, under the circumstances I have mentioned, obligation may well be endured and independency maintained, essentially different is it when weak or vicious men endeavour to bind, or bribe us to weak or vicious purposes. Then it is that we ought to solder up every avenue of the soul, and to spurn even the remotest notion of obligation. When men in power have so little regard to principle as to seek to engage intelligent minds in the defence of

conduct which is alarmed at investigation ; when they would seduce us into a vindication of measures which they know will not bear the light, and which the world knows, by woeful experience, to be productive only of corruption and unhappiness ; when the executive government of a country is so given up to a tyrannical and oppressive rule, that nothing is done for the common good, but all for the purpose of ministering to their own delinquent views—to accept of favours from such men, and under such circumstances, is indeed to relinquish integrity and to set a corrupt soul to sale at once. But, barring the almost total impossibility of such an administration obtaining under such a government and constitution as ours, how rarely do we meet with those who have any respect for themselves, or who are in possession of the least portion of it from their fellow citizens, that would thus condescend to serve such a government. There have indeed been bad statesmen, and bad statesmen will naturally elicit bad measures, and bad measures will call for unprincipled espousers ; but surely only those who are lost to shame, and dead to censure, and hardened against all reproach, will consent to sink into the last stage of debasement, by playing into such hands, and fighting the battles of such enemies of all virtue, public and private, as these.

I would have it carefully then remembered, gentlemen, that there may be, and very often is, dependence without debasement, because there very often is a necessity for engaging strenuous support in the defence of useful, though perhaps unpopular measures. Mr. Coke may boast of his independence as loudly as he pleases, but in the better, nobler sense of the word, Mr. Coke knows little of it, if it consist, as I am inclined to think it does, in the uniform exercise of a sound and discriminating judgment. For whose judgment, in every case of vital importance, less sound and discriminating than his ? Whose judgment, even

in the most petty political occurrences, oftener carried away by his passions? What more little, more frothy, more removed from that experience which a wise and broad reflection affords to every thinking man, than Mr. Coke's assertion, "had I placed myself under the cloak of ministers, from that moment I should have felt myself bound to adhere to them."* To adhere to them, so long as they adhered to what he conceived to be constitutional and beneficial; constitutional according to the established laws and regulations of the realm, and beneficial, not only to that part of the county of Norfolk devoted to his immediate interest, but to the whole of the county; not only to the county, but to the whole of the united empire; to have done this, would certainly have been both Mr. Coke's duty, (though it has rarely, I doubt, made any part of it,) and every man's duty. But because we approve of their general principles, to suppose that we are pledged to every particular measure of government; because we are ready to meet them on subjects of confessedly prime and public importance, to imagine that we must coalesce with them too in every domestic regulation, is to confess the narrowness of our researches, and the slender views we have taken of that large and varying polity by which governments, constituted like our own, and eternally subject to the influence of sinister designs, can alone be preserved. It little signifies that Mr. Coke tells us "he was born a Whig, he was educated a Whig, and a Whig he will die,"* if he entertain such pitiful notions as these. If these be his standards of representative perfection, his grounds of parliamentary action, he has not fallen, only because he has not been tempted, and, grating as he may feel it to his pride, has to thank the imbecility of his politics for the boasted independence of his conduct.

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

It is, surely, not to such a man that, on any principle of party spirit, short of a total surrender of the exercise of our judgment, we can give either vote or interest. It is not such a man, whatever be his domestic virtues, that deserves it. It were well if we would consent to draw the line a little closer between the conduct which our policy may impose, and that which our conscience demands of us. Some severance, if we would not put "bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter," is necessary between our interest and our inclination. I see not how we can make a promise, or bestow a vote, or exert the smallest portion of influence, where, bona fide, we approve not of the candidate. No patron ought to ask such a sacrifice of us : no patron ought to be obliged if he did. To vote for the man whose principles we inwardly condemn, is bad every way. It may teach the honest mind to believe that we have ourselves adopted those principles. It may lead the unwary to imagine that little attention is required in the examination of a candidate for public favour. It may encourage the self-interested to conclude that, provided we see our own gain in the selection, to whom, or for what purpose we give our votes is of very inferior consideration. It, in short, goes far to disfranchise us in conscience though not in law ; to overturn all principle, all wisdom in our choice, and all virtue in our election of parliamentary representatives. The act is before the public, and the sentiment will be presumptive from the act. In gratitude we are bound to our friends and patrons, and that gratitude should induce us, in the transactions of private life, to wish them well, to do them service, and evermore to hold their kindness in remembrance. But no feelings of gratitude should be suffered so to operate upon our minds, in the larger concerns of the public good, as to influence our opinions where our hearts are not influenced, and where the due exercise of our judgment might, perhaps, induce

us to a diametrically opposite conduct. We must in such a situation recollect that persuasion is bribery, that over-awing is corruption, and that yielding there-to is debasement. The constitutional exercise of the elective franchise (and shame be upon the head of those who disturb it) must be sanctified by the previous exercise of reason, of honour, and of conscience.

It is difficult to detect the motives by which even the virtuous themselves are sometimes influenced to bring virtue into discredit. Man hath indeed a soul of celestial origin, and fitted to any purpose commensurate with its restrained nature. But when it is drawn from its native bearing, it may so waste its powers upon ignoble objects, that the very sons of Brutus shall be found among the abettors of wrong. Every mind is occasionally subject to those vicissitudes of passion and contentions of interest which too often sway us in the narrow concerns of mortality. Yet I know not that any apology can be made for deviations from the usual course of integrity, which are not forced upon us by an over-ruling compulsion, but which, though it may be with some hesitation, we voluntarily embrace,

——— What thou would'st highly
That would'st thou holily; would'st not play false
And yet would'st wrongly win.*

Alas! the laws of social intercourse, and they are well understood; the usages, and regulations, and decorous bearings of social life cannot tolerate any such censurable discrepancies! Eloquence is forgotten where any thing short of what ought to be its aim is consulted; and that man is learned in vain who suffers his powers to desert him at the moment when he should call them forth in the support of those duties which his conscience and his country demand of him.

* Shakespear's Macbeth.

There is, if I may be allowed the term, a political sympathy that is noble, and there is a political sympathy that is every thing but noble; a species of liberality for which, in the plain, undisguised vocabularies of mental integrity, I confess I can find no name. It is Tully's advice,* never to venture upon that which is discreditable for the sake of obliging our friends. I love the principle, and I love it not the less because it is the old, and tried, and venerable principle of ancient and better days. We are all indeed, at times, the children of circumstance; willing to concede, as far as we can, to our private feelings of respect, and sometimes even to surrender our better judgments at the shrine of our friendships. *Dulce periculum est*; yet thus far we may, perhaps, go, and nobody have the heart to chide us. Thus far we may venture, and the world still give us credit for all that it had been accustomed to credit us for. But when, with a temerity for which it would be difficult to plead a becoming precedent, we hazard our steps beyond this farthest bourn; when we evince an implicit faith in the public virtue and wisdom of men less wise, probably, and virtuous than ourselves; when we subscribe to political doctrines which we care not perhaps to examine, and cleave to political conduct which we venture not too nicely to analyze; when we openly, and with no checks from private feeling, or the regards due to popular decorum, tell the astonished world, *that on every future occasion we shall give our vote*, not according to our own deliberate choice, our own serious conviction after due investigation of the fitness of the candidate for so solemn and important a trust, but—no matter of what motly description he may eventually turn out—to the candidate who is approved by our long-tried and honourable

* De Officiis. Lib. 2. c. 20.

patron,* we then deservedly sink in the public estimate, and can only find security from exposure where either we are not noticed, or are not worth notice. Our patron may be gratified with so rich and rare a tribute, but surely "our graver business" must "frown at this levity." It is the sacrifice of intellect at the shrine of presumption, reflecting no spark of honour upon the dumb idol, but overwhelming his literary worshipper with piteous and unintermixed ignominy.

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?

Who would not weep, if *Atticus* were he!†

From such a party feeling, gentlemen, warped from its eagle-eyed discernment, its naturally righteous bias by endearments of private connection, you will do well, notwithstanding this high authority, very carefully to guard yourselves. From such a passive, despicable, destructive surrender of the exercise of your judgment upon the public principles of the candidates for your favour, you will refrain at all times, and especially in times of so potent a concernment as the present.‡

* It is unnecessary to refer to the record from whence this passage is extracted. It is, I doubt, but too well known and too largely circulated.

† Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

‡ Some, however, there are who seem to have followed this example, destructive of all public virtue, as of necessity it must be. Thus General Fitzroy is reported as declaring, (*Bury Post*, Sept. 3, 1817) that "his love and affection for Mr. Coke, and the confidence he placed in his principles, would always induce him to give his vote for any friend he (Mr. Coke) might support." Thus too the Hon. D. Kinnaird observed at the late Westminster election, (*Courier*, Feb. 13, 1819) "that he would vote for Mr. Hobhouse, for he was a radical and intellible reformer; and such was his entire confidence in his principles, that he would unhesitatingly subscribe his name to the principles upon which he knew he would act." These gentlemen certainly here go great lengths, yet if madam Fame be not an errant baggage, (which I am inclined to believe, from the consummate impudence of her report, she is)

With these preliminary observations upon the nature of party spirit, I proceed, gentlemen, to consider the evil we are exposed to, and the danger of our constitution, civil and ecclesiastic, from the prevailing spirit of the times, a spirit flowing from many various sources, and inundating the empire, from one end to the other, with principles of the most disorganizing complexion. All I dare aim at in such an investigation is the hope that I may be able to call forth your reflection to go along with me, to assist and to strengthen me; for very inadequate must otherwise be my endeavours, in so desultory a tract of thought, to possess you of the extent, or even perhaps of the existence of our common danger. Situated, however, as we are amid much solemnity of expectation, it is needful to rouse your feelings to a prospect at once gloomy and imminent, and in which you, and the pledges of your affection, may be destined to possess so intimate a concern. Yet I will not answer for it that any representations shall have their proper saving effects. Perhaps the general judgment may be averse to imputations of disaffection where it had only contemplated prospects of patriotism. No man can do more for the public

we can produce you in Norfolk an example of this nature, in a high official *law* character, still more remarkable, who, it is said, *did actually vote for the Whigs of Norwich one day, and for the Tories of Yarmouth the next!* The fact admitted, how can we account for so unblushing an exercise of the elective franchise? "You are always to bear in mind (says this learned justicer) that a *chief magistrate*, as such, should be of no party." (Norfolk Chronicle, June 20, 1818.) But does it therefore follow that, by way of calling quits, the *steward of the corporation* may be of both? I will forbear to dwell on a circumstance which I feel confident cannot have its foundation in truth; for I see not how human nature, debased to its very lowest, vilest condition, can, politically speaking, produce a mind so thoroughly contemptible. The report is current. Mr. Alderson has now the opportunity of contradicting it.

good than the public voice and inclination will suffer him to do. No investigations can benefit society to a larger extent than society desires, or deserves to be benefitted by. When the popular feeling takes a turn that is not consistent with, or friendly to virtue, virtue must be content patiently to lay herself out for sacrifice. There are times when men will not bear those reflections on their conduct and those restrictions on their passions that are necessary to the well-being of themselves and of their fellow citizens. In such a case they must be left to feel their punishment, where, by a more chastised demeanour, they might have found their comfort. Still, however, the voice of truth and reason ought to be heard. The unhappy portraiture ought to be drawn, though few may be found to acknowledge the fidelity of the features.

The present deplorable state of the public mind in this kingdom, to which indeed, mediately, many things conduce, may yet be contemplated as springing more immediately from the late French revolution, that revolution (to which other inferior causes contributed) from the philosophical infidelity of the higher classes among them, together with a systematic defamation of religion, ripened and brought into action by the American rebellion, and that rebellion from the principles of dissent introduced into our colonies by those who seceded from our establishment soon after the reformation, aided by the rancour of dissenting and Whig opposition and the popular seditions, at a period when an insolent demagogue was permitted to insult, almost at his pleasure, every constituted authority, and when an administration, neither wanting in wisdom nor virtue, was yet alarmed enough weakly to bow before as foul and loathsome a storm as ever poisoned the air, or blasted the honour of the British Empire. These, gentlemen, seem to me among the primitive sources, the dark and defiled channels to which, if we would fairly trace the revo-

lutionary spirit as it has flowed on, and progressively, in a fuller stream from year to year among us, we shall be constrained to go back.

At both the reformation and the revolution much was done in this kingdom to insure the sacred regards of posterity ; but at neither of these periods could preparations be made against evils which were not in existence, nor even probably in contemplation. That deadly spirit of dissent which now, like a demoniac, possesses us, had not appeared at the former of these junctures, nor those seditious movements, the natural result of religious secession, been disciplined and embodied in the latter. Too soon, however, these factious zealots from the pale of the establishment began their disorganizing operations. Dissent ravaged the church and disaffection infected the state. A point of union in the freedom of our constitution, as settled at the revolution, was presently discovered, and there they met—there the seceders from the religion met and embraced the hitherto feeble opponents of the government of the realm. They presently knotted themselves into an indissoluble body. They both hung together, and worked together, and brought their common energies and their common hostilities, and cast them into one daring and pernicious heap. From a few doubtful principles of religious dissent, they contrived to elicit as many maxims of political sedition, as, at various periods and under various emergencies, they have deemed necessary to their purpose ; while the democratical corollaries, from their dissentient propositions, became as numerous as an unsound head, or a corrupt heart might chuse to make them.

Political parties against government in this country, gentlemen, do certainly owe much of their rancour to repeated secessions from the established church. Trace the current of opposition in our commons house of parliament, from the era of the

revolution, prior to which systematic opposition was, I think, but little known, down to the present times, and you will find it increasing in a coarse, overbearing fervour, as the principles of dissent have increased. These principles have given rise to a spirit of political and religious investigation, which acknowledges no bounds of either virtue or decorum. Nor is there any telling at what point the contumacious disposition thus generated may stop, as enthusiasm is daily more and more mixing itself with political enmity, and conjointly forming a disorganizing power, which bids fair to be an over-match for the firmest legislative regulations against it. This broad, blasphemous spirit, amalgamating a bitterness of political with a wild wantonness of religious discussion, has at length settled the minds of many into a remorseless opposition to almost every measure which an established government deems proper for the security of the state. Indeed every thing now done against the state, may be considered as done with the connivance, and under the sanction of those who are adverse to the church.

I beseech those who have any doubt of the dissenters mixing themselves with, and being, in fact, at the root of the revolutionary movements at present discernible among us, I beseech them to look to the description of men throughout the kingdom who are most forward in reviling our established church, in censuring the measures of our established government and administration, and in advocating what they are pleased to call the cause of reform. Of what, gentlemen, is this long and formidable list composed? Of sectaries of various and untold description—of all who have been bred dissenters—of all who have left, and who, with pretexts as flimsy as their faith, are leaving their church—of those who still continue with us, and call themselves churchmen, evangelical churchmen, but who, so far as the doctrines and church

practices of many among them go, are as errant dissenters in life and spirit as ever dishonoured the credit of the establishment—of loose, and light, and indifferent characters who care nothing about either cathedrals, or conventicles, so they can but see the game up and ready for pursuit—and (it grieves me to add such men to such a catalogue) of those who representing the clergy as little better than oppressors and pillagers for the revenues which they draw from the landed property of the kingdom, and which the legislature has thought fit to protect them in the possession of, think they cannot better serve their own interest than in pleading the cause of ecclesiastical reform, though, so far as respects themselves, they do it with a conviction of the impolicy of such a conduct rivetted on their hearts, and so far as the clergy are concerned, with the injustice of it awfully dispersed throughout every fold of their conscience.

Such are, for the more part, the determined and disaffected reformers of the day. Few attached to the church, seriously, sacredly, hereditarily attached to it, have joined this seditious standard. I send those who desire conviction on this subject to their respective neighbourhoods, and they will soon discover that the enemies of our established institutions are, in every place, the sectaries around them, seconded by those who never were churchmen in any thing but appearance, and who would, many of them, long since have cast off the very cloak of their profession, if feelings of interest, constantly uppermost in all their plans of radical reform, had not compelled them still to consent to wear it. The doctrines advocated by these men, formed upon the principles of dissent, and so well calculated for stirring up a seditious spirit among the people, can indeed only be gathered from their practical effect, for other evidence of them than this they rarely chuse to afford us. They withhold what every man has a right to claim at their hands.

They permit no questions nor return any answers. We must gather up their character as we can, and judge of their conduct as we please. This is the true tone of insolent and designing minds. "Subborn audacity (as Dr. Johnson has remarked,) is the last refuge of guilt."

Gentlemen, if we wish to preserve our constitution in church and state, (the key stone of our private patrimonies and possessions) we cannot too narrowly watch this growing phalanx of opposition. The dissenting interest is a power that never sleeps, and that requires, on our part, a searching, bold, determined spirit, that will neither sleep nor faint, nor be drugged or possetted into that stupid repose which must inevitably end in ruin. Daring in its nature, alarming in its principles, and, beyond conception, dreadful in the operation of such principles, the dissenting interest is even now fostering disaffection throughout the kingdom by its religious doctrines, its political spirit, its insolent demands, its crafty subterfuges, its plausible appeals to national liberality, its inlisting in its own service all the honest simplicity and all the bad ability that forsake ours. The dissenters are canvassing the people for their votes for revolution, under colour of the bible, hypocritically held out for their salvation. These saintly apostles of the French school, never losing sight of their unholy purposes, represent the church as the people's enemy, the state as their enemy, the existing administration and every good and wholesome enactment thereof as their enemy. Indisposition towards a monarchical government marks all their proceeds. The very catechism of their conventicles is a manual of disaffection towards their rulers. Give us heresies in the church, and feuds in the state shall never be far behind. Dissent in religion is dissent in every thing appertaining, however remotely, thereunto. The principles of dissent never did, or can accord with the feelings attached to

a monarchical government. They are all of republican growth. All tend to the nourishing of a republican spirit, and all verge towards that point where ecclesiastical establishments are despised, and civil establishments, by any ties whatever attached to them, despised also.

The dissenters are a veering, variable race. *Omnia transformant sese in miracula rerum*; but none of their protean shapes are other than alarming. They are now casting off their spiritual incumbrances, and becoming, more and more, a political body in the state, and such a political body as the state will, by and bye, be unable to awe by any restraints, to appease by any promises, or to conciliate by any concessions. Look, gentlemen, to our history from the reformation, and you will perceive that there is no pretext for separation from the established church in which these men will not be found to have offended. When they made our rites and ceremonies their stalking horse it was decidedly separating for mere trifles. When to these ceremonies they joined the censure of our discipline, it was still a very insufficient plea for the mischief that dissent spread around it. When they enlarged the borders of their spiritual rebellion, and made their objections to the weightier matters of our doctrines and to the manner in which we conceived of the mysteries of christianity, they sacrificed all sobriety and humility of mind, and indulged in prophane explanations, which they were certain could not be admitted by us, and which, with honest intentions of reconciliation with that church from whose pale they had departed, ought never to have been admitted by themselves. After exhausting every tenet of a religious, their principal objections are now of a political nature, and the reprobation of rites, and ceremonies, and discipline, and doctrine has given way to the denunciation, open and unqualified, of test and corporation acts. The dissenting interest,

in short, managed by the artful among them in every period, (for I would be far from implicating the staid and conscientious members of dissent in these unnatural conspiracies) has been swelling and rolling itself out from time to time, and using every season of difficulty and public commotion to the furtherance of its views, and filching here a little and there a little, and petitioning much, and complaining much, and threatening much, and receiving much; until at length, feeling its ground and perceiving how the deluded world is gone after it, it at once reposeth in its strength and its impudence, and petitions nothing and demands every thing.

O shame upon us, to be paying danegelt in such days, and to such apostate freebooters as these! What, are we to be constantly changing our legislative regulations because dissent is constantly changing its form and figure, and pleases to ask one boon to day, and, immediately chopping it down, to stand with its mouth wide open for another to-morrow? Because Dr. Priestley believed the church of England to be corrupt, branch and root, branch and root is the church of England to be exterminated? Because Dr. Price took it into his head to teach from the pulpit (a doctrine as rebellious in spirit as it was false in fact,) that the people of England, by virtue of their constitution, were empowered to chuse their own governors, to turn them adrift at their pleasure, and to cobble up, after their own fashion, a new government for themselves, are we to dissolve the whole frame of our political society, and, in conformity with this prolific pandect of disorganization, to begin the work afresh? Because Mr. Belsham, as superficial in his casuistry, as he is contemptible in his historical researches, takes upon him to assure us that "the sacred unalterable rights of conscience extend to the adoption, the profession, and the *peace-*

able promulgation of religious principles,"* are we therefore to allow to a Socinian conscience all the play, which, under such an easily abused and mischievous definition, it might be disposed to indulge in? I am sure, if we did, our legislative folly would far exceed their spiritual knavery, ample and consummate as it is. No—though we have suffered these men, a circumstance never enough to be regretted, to overleap by their insolence and subtlety some of our strongest barriers, yet at last surely government will be persuaded to make a stand. Even Mr. Belsham himself allows that our toleration act "goes as far as the great body of non-conformists of that day wished it to go."* And if it had never gone further, the church would have been benefited, the state would have been benefited, our legislators would have shewed themselves wiser, and our dissenters better men.

In the beginning of the present reign, secession from the church had produced a strong alienation of the popular mind from the state. It had gathered up in one inflammable heap all the bad and daring spirits of the realm, and the rebellion that broke out in America was the signal for its explosion. This rebellion in fact was, in a great measure, the offspring of dissent out of the kingdom, co-operating with dissent in the kingdom. At an early period those unruly members who were a thorn in the church's side so long as they remained in their own country, passed over to the continent, and there, imbibing with a full soul the Geneva confessions, at once spiritually placing them out of the pale of all ordinances, human or divine, added fuel to their ungovernable tempers. The descendants of these men were among the first settlers in our American colonies, thither transplanting, with themselves and their families, their rancour

* Rights of Conscience asserted and defined.

against the established laws and institutions of the mother country. The puritans of England therefore soon became the revolutionists of America ; and in all the proceedings of those unhappy times we shall find them foremost in urging their brethren to shake off the British yoke, and to free themselves from what was represented as an intolerable slavery.

Nor were these disloyal endeavours on their part met by any deficiency of a similar spirit on the part of their seceding brethren here. For never was public faction at a more deplorable height in England than during this period. Never was a dissenter found idle at his post, but leagued with the wayward politics of the day, his *Io triumphe* was joyfully added to the tumultuous movements and insults of the multitude. The party spirit then prevalent, made up of Whigs and dissenters, as the most violent and dauntless parties in this country usually are, carefully nourished every resistance to the measures of government in America. It was their virulent abuse of ministers at home that palsied all exertion for the public good abroad. It was the deadly animosity against both church and state of those out of power, with the view of extirpating those in power, that aided our rebel subjects more than their strongest armies. Every thing was held up to insult, before any thing could be executed. The opposition throughout to the American war which our county member so idly vaunts upon, was a dastardly, a dishonourable, a dishonest opposition ; an opposition to men and not to measures. The contest stamped indeed an indelible rancour on the minds of nearly all who, on that occasion, set themselves to harrass ministers. I think, in certain instances, it almost went to the length of treason ; and whoever will read and compare the most impartial records of that period of our history, will perhaps feel disposed to rest in the conclusion that it was the seditious Whig and dissenting spirit of the

English nation, aided by the pernicious eloquence of certain of their senatorial leaders, that set free the American revolutionists, and made them finally triumphant in the cause of republican disobedience.

And while all this was transacting, the very men who thus sacrificed their country to their own narrow party views, and their inordinate notions of political and religious freedom, were most bitter in their reproaches of that administration whose plans they were constantly thwarting, and in their denunciations of the motives of such as dared to differ from them in opinion. Even Mr. Burke, it is to be lamented, lent his large powers to this unjustifiable procedure. All the philosophy, all the morality, all the commanding eloquence of that great statesman, were well nigh shipwrecked "on this shoal and tide of time," and the mind intended by providence as the future saviour of empires, shrivelled up its feelings of honour at this distracted period, and became the mere cat's paw of a most debased and disorderly party. Ministers in the mean while acted as, I fear, they may be disposed but too similarly to act now. They saw the danger, but discerned neither the dignity nor the policy of their situation. They conceded to the popular mind all which they should have religiously withheld. They countenanced, because they did not dare to awe the most bold and seditious language, the most vile and seditious movements, and suffered a celebrated and insolent demagogue, under the revered name of liberty, to offer the grossest violation to its spirit, and to introduce licentiousness, and corruption, and disobedience, and disloyalty, and almost at his pleasure, among every class of the community. Contingent circumstances are sometimes unhappy circumstances. My Lord North was just such a minister as Wilkes and his partizans, and the partizans of America wanted. His firmness, at such a crisis, might have disarmed the rancour of opposition, and saved the nation much

loss and shame ; but his vacillating policy, his irresolute temper, his want of confidence in his own abilities, and his consequent half measures completed what their seditious oratory and turbulent movements had begun. As soon, therefore, as the American war broke out, the heart and soul of the rebellion were found lodged in the inflammatory means used to diffuse discontent and to provoke disloyalty in the mother country.

Still at no period, gentlemen, as Mr. Coke and his coadjutors would have us believe, was the contest with America unpopular with the nation at large, though every measure of government was cruelly thwarted and every slander thrown upon the constitutional abettors of it. The eloquence of the first men in parliament against it could not efface the impression of its justice from the minds of the people of England. The resistance of America bore, in fact, the brand of rebellion upon its front, and so strongly bore it, that not even our own national disasters and disgraces could give it any other figure. The people were well aware to whom and to what such disasters were attributable, and they less censured them as proofs of ministerial weakness, than as demonstrations of dissenting rancour, and of wild, headlong, ungovernable Whig opposition. The great Lord Chat-ham never contemplated the independence of America but with feelings of deep regret ; and even those who most contributed by their powerful eloquence to that result, yet acknowledged the result as unhappy. The first opposition for talents which this country perhaps ever produced, when they saw the fruits of their own devices, and looked on the desolation they had caused, if they repented them not of the evil, had, at least, remorse enough to conceal their unholy triumph ; and I have no doubt but that there were moments when the success of their machinations stung them to the very quick. With no sentiments of ap-

probation does it appear that even Louis the XVIth. himself acknowledged the independence of these unruly subjects, whom yet, by a fatal policy, he was persuaded to assist. Alas! when the Princes of the blood and the French nobility were so eager to proclaim what they called the cause of freedom in America, they foresaw not the bloody apparitions that, issuing from that charnel house of rebellion, were soon to appear upon their own stage, and that but the pause of a moment was allowed e'er "their country should be disolate and their cities burnt with fire!"

Some indeed there are who consider America, thus set free, as a sort of "promised land," a general blessing to the various nations of the earth. For my part, gentlemen, I can only contemplate her as a frightful excrescence upon the face of the civilized world. When she has purged and purified herself, she may, if she can hold together, (which I much doubt) become a great nation. At present she has nothing great about her but her baseness. She is the Roman state in her infancy, making, as far as she is able, "her strength her law," and, like the common enemy of mankind, roaming up and down seeking whom she may devour. I see nothing in America at present, to remove from us the recollection of her past detestable conduct. Her destination in the scale of nations is known to that power alone "whose throne is for ever and ever." She may at some distant period, under such a guidance as that of her modern scourge, General Andrew Jackson, become to the effeminate nations of Europe, the Huns and Goths that brought about the decadency of Rome. She may over-run our provinces, demolish our temples, change our institutions, plow up the foundations of our religion and laws, and on the scite erect her conventicles of democratical devotion for "Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics;" where "Christ, the author and finisher of our faith," shall, "finding no faith,"

for ever be obliterated from human recollection. In fact, there is no saying what this same America may turn out in the lapse of ages, or how far that unprincipled oligarchy may extend her growing plagues into futurity, which, at present, exhibits the young serpents crawling out of their beds of venom in every direction where the heavens may smile, or the air freshly blow upon them.*

These remarks, gentlemen, may not be found to be entirely irrelevant. The independence of America, in whatever light it may be viewed, can never be viewed in an indifferent light, because it can never be separated from the still greater changes that followed. Sober people have certainly considered it with varying opinions. As for the mere demagogues of the day, all changes are the same to them provided they can but profit by the unhappiness of the times. To the dissenting interest the result of the American rebellion was full, defecated satisfaction. Rejoicing in this work of destruction, and transported with the prospect of future revolutionary consequences, that interest was again speedily upon the alert, and, like the "last enemy that shall be destroyed,"

Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blest his maw
Destin'd to that good hour. ————— †

That good hour, alas! was not far off! Those future revolutionary consequences were soon to follow!

* It is impossible America should preserve peace with the nations of Europe. Constituted and situated as she is, it is impossible she should wish to preserve it. Her political concerns are beginning to be transacted upon a large scale. Upon an infamous scale I need not add, for they have never been transacted upon any other. Her nefarious jobbings at present surprize us. They will by and bye alarm us.

† Paradise Lost. Book 2.

The seal of American independence was hardly cold e'er the revolution of France burst forth, and the subjugation of nearly half the civilized world was an almost immediate consequence. Not only indeed did the success of the American rebellion hasten the French revolution; it did more; it formed and moulded that revolution, it gave to it its own dislocated limbs, its loathsome features, its coarse lineaments, its dark, unnatural, unrelenting heart, and contributed very essentially to make it what it was, the *aceldama* of modern Christendom. It chalked out its line of procedure with the republican pencil. It imparted a republican spirit to all its operations; and that spirit, working in a field where religion had previously been debased and nearly driven out, degenerated into crime without virtue, and cruelty without remorse. Under the fair guidance of this elder sister of disloyalty, the guillotine presently became the standing legislature of the land, and, as was easy to be foreseen, the red cap of the indivisible republic ended in the iron crown of the dictatorial usurper.

I wish it, gentlemen, to be firmly impressed upon your minds, and evermore to make a solemn part of your political creed, that there are but too many reasons to bear us out in the persuasion that we are at this moment, in this kingdom, travelling hard upon the high road of the French revolution. It is, I allow, a great thing to say; but, for any efficient purpose, we cannot say less, and we had better be taxed, if the event should so prove, for want of judgment, than where the safety of an empire is concerned, for lack of reasonable apprehension, or timely preparation and prevention. At all events, whatever may be the scorn, whatever the aspersions that await me, that opinion of the tendency of the present bad spirit among us I do most seriously entertain, and do make it the foundation of the principal drift of this Letter. If, from a consideration of the points in which our

adversaries seem to coalesce, there be no symptoms of a national revolution among us, the main grounds of my Address I acknowledge to be taken away, and the reader has only to finish his perusal at this point and to close the book.

The causes of the French revolution it will not be necessary to advert to ; they are in recent recollection. We must not, however, be forward to believe that it was the sins of the old government of France which brought about this dreadful catastrophe. The old government of France certainly had sins, but none that might not have been corrected by milder remedies. The sins of the philosophers, as they were called, (those pests in every nation) had a much greater share in this revolution. They were crying sins that had been defiling God and man for years, and that, in their impious pages, had appeared in a blacker cast and done more mischief than all the hypocrisy of their church and all the despotism of their throne. Into a hot and seditious soil we must needs be careful what seed is thrown. All the dregs of the French revolution have long been settling on English lees, and such is the affinity of the mixture that hardly any alchymy can detect the transmutation. Gentlemen, it is to this revolution, brought on partly by our own political and religious attainures, that we must look for our greatest danger. It has already spent its rage in its native bed, but driving over the civilized world in a night of blackness and darkness, its disorganizing remains are found but too plentifully cast on every shore, and more particularly upon our own. Certainly at the commencement of the æra we are speaking of, much approbation was expressed in this country by all who wished well to regulated freedom, by many who hoped that the new French constitution would settle down into something like our own, and by more who believed that civil and religious freedom in England would eventually

be consolidated by this apparent triumph of it in France. It was thought that that kingdom, ever restless and aspiring under a regal despotism, would, on this recovery of its rights and liberties, learn to venerate and even seek to improve the rights and liberties of other states ; and that the epoch of political reform was at length arrived when what was termed the balance of power would no longer be necessary, but that every nation might from henceforth afford to rest upon its arms, and not constrained to "learn war any more," might "beat its swords into ploughshares and its spears into pruning hooks."

The first ebullitions in favour of liberty, especially under despotic governments, we can forgive—we can forgive the overflowings of the heart, and suffer it to take somewhat from the cool deductions of the judgment. As the past had been viewed in the darkest colours, it was natural to expect that the future would be clothed in the sweetest drapery. This feeling was full, animated, extensive—but, "brief as the lightning in the colly'd night," it was the feeling of the moment and died almost in its very birth. Like a beautiful corpse exposed to the air, we touched it and it became dust ! The French revolution presently spread itself over the earth in all its republican deformity. It filled its unhappy country with domestic horrors. It threw its gigantic limbs abroad, and subjugated to its fraternal embrace every state that was not potent, or politic, or fortunate enough to resist the progress of its strength and villainy. It settled within its bowels a huge centre of anarchy, from whence war rushed forth and almost depopulated the kingdoms of Europe exposed to its exterminating principles. For upon the track of those principles rebellion in every nation followed, and blood and murder followed upon rebellion, and the land was darkened, and the heart hardened, and morality changing its very body and nature, crime became virtuous and virtue criminal.

Tacitus, in his description of the calamitous condition of Rome after the death of Vitellius, has drawn a picture for posterity, which posterity will do well to recollect, and to recollect that this horrible painting is from the life. “*Interfecto Vitellio, bellum magis disierat, quam pax cæperat. Armati per Urbem victores, implacabili odio, victos consecabantur. plenæ cædibus viæ, cruenta fora templaque, passim trucidatis, ut quemque sors obtulerat. Ac mox augescente licentia, scrutari, ac protrahere abditos: si quem procerum habitu & juventa prospexerant, obtruncare, nullo militum, aut populi discrimine. Quæ sævitia recentibus odiis sanguine explebatur, dein verterat in avaritiam. nihil usquam secretum aut clausum sinebant, Vitellianos occultari simulant. Initium id perfringendarum domuum; vel si resisteretur, caussa cædis. nec deerat egentissimus quisque ex plebe. & pessimi servitiorum prodere ultro dites dominos: alii ab amicis monstrabantur. Ubique lamenta, conclamationes, & fortuna captæ urbis, adeo ut Othoniani Vitellianique militis invidiosa antea petulantia desideraretur. Duces partium accendendo civili bello acres, temperandæ victoriæ impares. quippe in turbas & discordias pessimo cuique plurima vis: pax et quies bonis artibus indigent.*”*. Has not the historian here darted his discerning eye through future remote ages, and placed before us, with all the glow of prophecy, the enormities of the late French revolution? Has he not here, gentlemen, forewarned us what will be the course of an English revolution? Has he not here drawn the character of party spirit and civil war, begun, fomented, and continued by the aspirings of bad men, to a guilty greatness, in every age and under every form of government? Mark the won-

* Hist. Lib. 4. c. 1.

derful and horrible process. See every popular character able to inflame, and none to curb the popular fury. See the pretences, idle and numerous as the stars that people heaven, for pillage, and plunder, and base assassination of friends and foes; and how the revolutionary spirit draws all within its vortex, all to assist in its violations that bear the marks of guilt, and all that are innocent to suffer by those violations. The history of Tacitus is the history of the human mind, in every period of the world, drawn out in the deformities of our common human nature, and the accuracy of the relation conceded, the benefit of it is incalculable.

Gentlemen, the French revolution, which has been the common bane, ought now to be the common security of the Christian world. Its dreadful example ought so to operate in every state, as to make the people bear many things from their lawful rulers sooner than risk a change; from rulers that temper mercy with justice, to bear every thing. I know there are those among us, neither few in number nor defective in influence, who do not love to hear either of the French revolution or of the times of the Protectorate; who would, if possible, exterminate the recollection of them from English bosoms, and who scout every idea of comparison between the two countries or the two periods. Doubtless they would find their benefit in blanketing up these horrors, but we shall find ours in the very opposite conduct; in bringing this train of congregating miseries full before the sight; in pressing its recollection upon our hearts, and in comparing, step by step, and line by line, and doctrine by doctrine, the notions entertained at that period in France with those no less corrupting and dreadful ones now entertained in England. This will make for our good, will deliver us from evil, will be perhaps the only thing that can deliver us from it. A curse to that unhappy country, timely contem-

plated, and prudently digested, and firmly counter-acted, the French revolution may be a blessing and salvation to ours. Banish it from our remembrance! O never, while we have the power of thought or the love of life! Duty, polity, hope, desire, despair, every good, every mournful passion of our nature rises up at once, and implores us never to forget the French revolution, and its first philosophical movers, and its low secondary instruments, and its mischievous propagators, and its miserable consequences, till we are content to forget that we have "houses, and lands, and flocks, and herds, and wives, and children," which we have no wish to see butchered and buried, and confiscated before our eyes, and every earthly thing taken from us before we are taken from the world.

France is, indeed, the last country on the face of the globe that we can afford to banish from recollection. France will never be an object of indifference with England. All her fashions and follies we import, all her infidelities we imbibe, all her demoralizing feelings we adopt. The licentiousness of France is the licentiousness of England and of the world at large; the box of Pandora that sends forth her pollutions and leaves only a cold and dying hope at the bottom. Like "a city set on an hill," she "cannot be hid." Her example is calculated to influence, and does in fact influence, every nation with which she comes in contact, and she is so situated as to come in contact with all. What France has been, we know; what she may be we have yet to learn. Unblemished manners she was never celebrated for, and since her revolution, those manners have, I fear, become more morose and revolting without being more virtuous.* They who visit her shores may, in

* Justice obliges me to add, that I have heard this opinion contradicted by a gentleman who visited France last summer, and to whose judgment, upon every occasion, I am disposed, with all who

many instances, probably, be neither over loyal, nor over religious. They who return from them but too frequently treat loyalty and religion with contempt. Gibbon, in his memoirs, remarks, that his Swiss education had made him forget that he was an Englishman. It is well if the air of Paris do not, by and bye, produce a similar malady among its British visitors. We are, morally speaking, mainly in her hands. In whatever light therefore we view this regenerated kingdom, it must be a mighty object with us.

I say not that, step by step, we are at this moment travelling up her dark, revolutionary line of blood. Thank God! we have no Regent Duke of Orleans to corrupt the public mind—no Prime Minister Dubois to alarm the public feeling—no Diderots and Voltaires to unsolemnize, with any thing like an equal ability, the public devotion—no Court Mistresses to discourage and insult the public virtue.—We have neither the frivolity, the dissipation, nor, though we are making large strides towards it, the disgusting infidelity of our Gallic neighbours. We are not yet

have the pleasure of his acquaintance, to pay the utmost deference. Much, however, as I respect, he must pardon me, in this instance, for not yielding to his authority; because in that case I must set aside, though not more valuable, yet far more large and full and numerous authority opposed against him. I must also set aside much of the evidence for the increased immorality of French manners, which is daily offering itself to us as matter of fact and experience, and must cast scorn upon many publications, and very reputable ones, which represent these manners in, I think, nearly the light in which I am compelled to view them. Besides, I am not sure whether the gentleman I allude to, and his accomplished lady, (who, accompanying him in his tour, has imbibed and thereby strengthened his sentiments) can be admitted as proper evidence in a case of this kind. They who, in so material a degree, make in every company the amiableness they insist upon; who by conversational powers of no ordinary cast draw towards them a polished, which by a native purity and correctness of conduct they convert into a virtuous society, are not, perhaps, the best qualified for forming an impartial estimate of the prevailing character of any people.

arrived at this apex of indifference and guilt. We have still, even among the least patriotic among us, some faint remains of British virtue left; some warm and early recollections of what an Englishman once was; some smothered feeling of what he ought to be. We can neither consent to cashier our kings with Dr. Price, nor to demolish our ecclesiastical establishment with Dr. Priestley, nor to abuse a reigning sovereign this moment and insidiously flatter him the next with Mr. Belsham, nor to attain every measure and every minister who is not of our persuasion with Mr. Coke, nor to bind up the heads of the people of England and decollate them, like the poppies of Tarquin, at one blow with the ruffians that follow in the train of Sir Frances Burdett and his satellites. We have yet, Providence be praised, qualms of conscience at the adoption of such principles and the commission of such deeds. We think our kings ought only to be cashiered by death. We believe our ecclesiastical establishment will be no nuisance if it be suffered to remain. We hold the possibility of virtuous measures, even in an administration constituted like the present, and the prosperity of the country to be as well consulted by Tory counsels as by Whig principles, and the power of the sword to the full as safe in the hands of the Duke of Wellington as in those of a Wat Tyler or a James Brandreth. Still we have instruments of revolution of no mean potency. We have dissent hourly increasing in political importance and party rancour. We have Whiggism degenerating from all its constitutional chastity, and lending its little pitiful soul to every secession from the church and every opposition to the state. We have "radical reformers" calling out for annual parliaments, and universal suffrage, and unbounded toleration, and the liberty of the press, and eliciting the pernicious doctrine that where there is no representation there ought to be no taxation,

where there is no voice in the making there is no sin in the breaking of the laws. We have revolutionists, who, spurred on by these congenial principles and by their own nakedness of property, and destitution of character, and desperation of circumstances, boldly demand at once the "Rights of Man," and the "Age of Reason," and "Political Justice," and the downfall of a bigoted church, and the destruction of a corrupt government.—We have all these seditious sources in reserve, and revolution can never surely feel herself poor, surrounded and seconded by such allies.

It is not in the compass of a confined tract like this, and where a variety of matter crowds so upon us, to trace, with any minuteness, the similarity of principles and practice between our present reformers and the French revolutionists. All I can do is to rough cast my reflections; to draw a melancholy outline, and leave it, gentlemen, to be filled up by your own retired thoughts, before the hand of time, all covered with blood, shall do it for you. Nor shall I offer this comparison as any other than an indirect one. Recalling the events of the French revolution and the doctrines which preceded and accompanied it, you will be able to draw it yourselves, as we proceed to consider certain great and leading points, the buttresses of our constitution, wherein it will be found, while our adversaries widely depart from us, how nearly they approach the confines of our Gallic neighbours. It is, indeed, hardly possible for any one who at all contemplates the present disposition of men's minds, to avoid falling in with an opinion of this nature. We need no skill, no divination in a case of this kind. We have but to look back and learn what is coming. We have but to contemplate the prospective through the retrospective. Our apprehensions for the future will be amply justified by our recollection of the past, and our feelings and experience of the present. With the bead-roll of infidelity

and democracy before us, we need not hesitate to prophesy of fearful changes, nor of the quarter from whence those changes may be expected to proceed.

It is true our adversaries would stifle all enquiry into their conduct and opinions, and would silence all comparison of them both with those advocated by ourselves at present, by the regicides of England in the time of Cromwell, and by the revolutionists of France. And this they do (and I know not that they could have taken a shrewder method,) by affecting the same regard for the established institutions of the country with those sincerely attached to them, the same veneration for the church, the same respect for the state, and the same abhorrence of anarchy. And certainly there is some difficulty in drawing the line of loyalty, where all professions are alike, and where the *orando pro rege et regno* seems to come with an equal sincerity from every lip. Where hereditary monarchy and the royal prerogative are supposed to be equally honoured—where freedom of speech and the liberty of the press, and a liberal toleration are cried up alike by all parties, hostile as they may be to each other—where so many important matters appear to lie in common, it may well be wondered what disagreements should warrant such mutual recriminations and asperities. Are we afraid of the spirit of whiggism, and have we any reformers that are not Whigs? Do we object to the friends and admirers of the British constitution, and are not all its friends and admirers? Are not my Lord Albemarle and Mr. Coke for the constitution? Are not Sir Frances Burdett and Mr. Hobhouse for the constitution? Are not Mr. Cobbet, and Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Gale Jones for the constitution? Nay, is not even Mr. Wooler for the constitution, and Mr. Waithman, and Mr. Edward Taylor, of Norwich, and Mr. Nathaniel Palmer, of Yarmouth, and the whole spawn of little pitiful demagogues dispersed throughout the land—are they

not all, all for the constitution, the blessed glorious constitution founded upon the invaluable principles of the revolution of 1688?

Indeed they are—these “wise and good men” that have been so ungraciously traduced are all for the constitution! Tories, Whigs, Reformers, Democrats, Dissenters, Anarchists; all break from their moorings and gather round this vessel of the state.—All bow to this watch word which passeth them safely through “evil report and good report” All use this form of incantation and feel themselves secure.—But, gentlemen, we must judge of the tree by its fruit. Some of this fruit, and sufficiently unpallatable, I have already glanced at. Pray let us look to the criterions of this generally presumed attachment, and the difficulty may not be so great as we imagine in distinguishing, though they have the assurance to range themselves under the same banners, the enemies of church and state from their friends. We may safely, I think, contend without much fear of disapproval, that they who, upon every occasion, attack the measures of a reigning ministry; they who are constantly making their appeals to the people against the executive government; they who see nothing in the ordinances of our ecclesiastical establishment, or in the conduct of its clergy to approve, nothing in the legislative enactments of those who, for the public good, “have the rule over them” to be grateful for; they who in times of trouble, and with no proof that the kingdom is in danger from any undue exercise of the royal prerogative, are yet for paring down prerogative as low as possible; they who, casting back reflection on the current of events in the last twenty or thirty years, declare that every thing which has been done for the country has been done to its degradation and subversion, though the security of that country hath been nobly atchieved and its glory perpetually increasing; they who carry a party spirit to the ex-

tion of all order and happiness, and care not who or what suffers so their own petty interests do but prevail; they, in short, who in the plenitude of their malice accuse the best defenders of the common wealth as its bitterest oppressors, the best measures of administration in support of the national tranquillity as the fullest and deadliest violations thereof, and who pretend that ministers are destroying every principle of the constitution as established at the era of the revolution, though no period, I will venture to say, can they assign when those principles were more steadily adhered to, and more wisely and firmly supported—they, I contend, who thus think, thus speak, thus upon all occasions act, are certainly not the men, whatever may be their pretensions, who can have any real esteem for either king or constitution, church or state.

Believe me the true friends of the constitution are never found among the stirrers up of the people; they are never found, under vain and frothy pretexts, the advocates for popular clamour. They love to feel themselves strong as a party, but as a pure, orthodox, loyal, and constitutional party, and not a great mass of riot and rottenness, made up of the very off-scourings of the earth, and with every man a creed and confession of his own, under colour of which, as the times serve, he may vote loyalty a duty or a defect, and advocate the doctrine of submission or of resistance. The true friends of the constitution will recollect the grounds of that revolution which fixed the liberties of England on their present firm footing, and making every part of their conduct tally therewith, will forbear, for slight offences, to disturb them. For slight offences they were not intended to be disturbed. Let our republican Whigs and Dissenters continue to boast of their attachment to the glorious principles of the revolution of 1688, which fixed the illustrious house of Hanover on the throne of these realms; but that revolution, gentlemen, would never have seen

the light, nor that house ever probably been called to reign over us, if an innate affection for monarchy and an ecclesiastical establishment in the people at large, aided most materially by the high church principles that obtained among the clergy, had not thrown their irresistible support into the scale. With the démocratical and dissenting spirit at that period, the revolution was a mere choice of evils. King William and the house of Hanover they cared little about; they merely dreaded King James and the house of Stewart. As the reformation did not go half far enough for them, so neither did this revolution, which, however, as a cloak for deeper designs, and as a ticket of admission into good company, they set up with the rest as the political idol of the day. The reformation, to have pleased them, should have established no religion but of their own sour and Calvinistic choice; and while it drove out Popery should have given a death blow too to prelacy. The revolution should have abolished all penalties and tests; should, in fact, have subverted, instead of having reformed our primitive constitution. But as it did not think proper to go these lengths, or to clasp as denizens to its bosom the vipers that had been long sucking at its blood; and as these dissenters, backed by the whole host of the disaffected and démocratical, are ever execrating these restraints, it is pretty evident what they think of "the glorious revolution of 1688," notwithstanding their canonization of its apostles, and their anniversary meetings and magnificats.

Be assured, whatever these vily advocates of the "Rights of Man" may pretend, it is no narrow frith that separates us and them; no trifling dispute as to whether a Whig or Tory administration shall govern, whether a Whig or Tory candidate shall be elected, or whether, after election, this or that member be deemed best to have fulfilled his parliamentary duties.

and to have answered the expectations of his constituents. No, gentlemen, the great line that politically separates us at this moment is the line that separates light from darkness, loyalty from sedition, the love of our country from the hatred of it, its destruction from its salvation. Our political differences are the difference between obedience and rebellion—our political struggle the struggle between life and death! All that makes up the moral happiness of society and the peace of the realm is engaged on one side, all that tends to the extinguishment of that peace and happiness on the other. These high reformers then let us manfully resist in every stage of their nefarious proceedings, and let us hold them up to public execration wherever they are daring enough to solicit public esteem.

I will give you, gentlemen, in few words, an abstract of our varying opinions on certain leading topics of discussion; and judge from thence how far our reforming adversaries can be said to have, justly speaking, any thing in common with us, and how far they are intitled to any shadow of respect from us.—They then, like revolutionary France, depend upon a philosophical infidelity for the furtherance of their views, religious and political; we abhor all philosophical infidelity.—They, like revolutionary France, are advocating and employing a licentious press, which bids fair to overthrow all notions of moral right or wrong; we are for restraining that press within the sacred bounds of honour, of reason, and of conscience.—They, like revolutionary France, assimilate with themselves all parties hostile to the government, and in one full combination make their attack upon the friends of government; we deplore such assimilations and hold most of those parties to be anarchical.—They, like revolutionary France, undervalue hereditary succession and the prerogatives of the crown, and press forward reform upon the broad and universal suffrage plan, as giving to them fairer and more

enlarged prospects of success; we revere such succession and prerogatives as much as we detest such attempts at reformation.—They, like revolutionary France, advocate the majesty of the people and systematically degrade rank, and title, and family; we, despising the majesty, seek the comfort of the people and uphold the distinctions of rank.—Finally, they, like revolutionary France, inflaming and deluding the common mind, labour to introduce, as the winding up of the “radical reform” system, a republican government; we, convinced that such a government must be attended with the destruction of the constitution, the loss of lives, and the confiscation of property, are for warding off that pest of human society, and for preparing the people, with all the powers which God and nature has given them, to oppose such a dreadful catastrophe.

These, gentlemen, are some of the great points on which we are most compleatly at issue with our various adversaries; with those adversaries who affect to venerate the same established religion, the same established constitution and government, and in the same degree, too, as ourselves. These are the important topics to which I now mean to direct your attention, and I will take them, for the sake of in some measure methodizing my reflections, in the order in which they are here set down.

Let me beg of you then to consider, in the first place, *the similitude between the two countries and periods we are alluding to, in what may be termed their philosophical and literary exposé.* France had her Voltaires, her Rousseaus, her Diderots, men who way-laid and assassinated virtue wherever they found her. We have our Humes, our Gibbons, and a whole shoal of republican and deistical writers, who butcher Christianity, and “speak evil of dignities” in every page of their productions. The French philosophers have acted their wretched parts, and are

gone to rest ; to such rest as those have reason to expect whose principles desolated the world before their souls departed into darkness. Foremost among these eternal enemies of the human race, was their celebrated philosopher *Voltaire*, had in reverence in his own country, and not without his admirers in this. Indeed, with those among us who are daily clubbing their mites to the infidel treasury towards the subversion of society, and exclaiming with the monster of the poet, "ruin, and spoil, and havoc are my gain," *Voltaire* is little less than a divinity. Such spirits are cast for contamination, and they go for it to the fountain head at once. I know of no writings equal in perniciousness to the writings of this man. God had given him great abilities, and he laid them out in the service of the devil. His universal learning he made subservient to universal corruption. His wit was employed against virtue and his talents against truth. Where he found religion, and where he found the semblance or abuse of it, he alike aimed his heaviest blows against them. There is a deadly fascination in his works. His eye is cast upon us, and we are gone. Every weak mind he over turns, every virtuous mind he disquiets, every bad mind he fixes in everlasting iniquity. All who drink from these poisoned springs become corrupt, and all whom they corrupt they corrupt to the very core. His poetry, his romances, his history, his philosophy, are alike charged with a sneering, blasphemous, lying spirit ; a spirit that is, at this moment, working its way over the world, and "destroying the hopes of man," and binding him in the eternal sleep of death, and unsolemnizing his prospect of futurity, and throwing at once a thick darkness over all his comforts in this world, and all his soothing, anxious expectations of another and a better. The philosopher of Ferny, however, is at length silent in his grave ; a loathsome and unhallowed spot, which spring may indeed re-

turn to deck, but which no gentle spirit shall ever visit. May God forgive him his violations of truth and virtue ; for man, daily and hourly suffering by their operation, I fear never can !

Though I will not assert that they are cast in the same mould, yet I know not, looking to the tendency and to the practical demoralizing effects of their labours, that the memory of the historian of our own country, or of the still more celebrated historian of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, is entitled to a much deeper respect than that of Voltaire. He who thinks scorn of the doctrines of Christianity, what reverence can he preserve for established government founded on Christianity as a basis, and allying itself to Christianity as a security ; or how will he impress the duty of “ rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsars,” who impiously withholds from God “ the things that are Gods.” What can influence such men to obey the magistrate, to support the government, or to yield up any of their inordinate appetites to the public and social good ? He who allows of no crime in blasphemy, it is fairly to be presumed will feel no guilt in treason ; but ambition, and avarice, and cruelty, and bloodshed will be fair means towards their procuring and enlarging of bad enjoyments in this world, who believe nothing of the certainty, nor feel any thing of the awfulness of the rewards and punishments of another. For all the celebrity of *Hume* and *Gibbon*, a virtuous mind would shudder to be the author of the works of either ; works which seem destined, though with perhaps a less universal spread than those of Voltaire, to pollute posterity to the latest generations. Their readers are numerous, and numerous in this kingdom are their disciples ; men who imbibe their malice against Christianity, though with none, or the most contemptible portion, of their intelligence or learning. Yes—our host of petty philosophical free-thinkers follow on the track of these their infidel.

leaders, though spotted by the blood of apostles and disciples. Wherever they congregate, and the herd is largely scattered, they raise their scaffolds and erect their gibbets; and calling from their tombs "the spirits of just men made perfect," with a refined cruelty they bind them, by their unhallowed incantations, to the stake of martyrdom afresh.

Indeed for many years past this nation, I am sorry to observe, has been nurtured, as it were, in the very cradle of faction, which may be said both to produce and to be produced by infidelity. We have been seduced from our infancy to revere the principles of Milton, of Sydney, of Hampden, and of Lock. Lock and Milton, it is true, have rendered themselves immortal, but not, I think, by their political writings; nor have those writings, viewing them every way, much perhaps redounded to the benefit of posterity. Milton's principles were decidedly republican; and as for Mr. Lock's speculations, practically followed up, they would, I fear, go near to bring this country into a state of anarchy. The rudiments of rebellion are very plainly discoverable in the political writings of both these great men. They have sown, though with pure intendment, an unhappy seed in their native soil, and it is well if the land ever get rid of the consequent rank vegetation. The common mind cannot act upon abstract principles of virtue; the depraved mind will not. He who imbibes Mr. Lock's principles of government, had need possess Mr. Lock's integrity and ability. But many have, unfortunately, taken them up in this country without the slightest pretensions to either. The result is apparent. They are become very free thinkers, and, by the same process, very foolish and pernicious thinkers.

Despotism indeed will not stand against increasing light and knowledge; it is not desirable that it should. Sound knowledge will ever be found productive of rational liberty, sound philosophy of rational Chris-

tianity ; these will go hand in hand, and, at every stage, will adorn, and improve, and secure each other. But such superficial notions as pass for current knowledge, gentlemen, in the present times ; such infidel and scrambling principles as are now a-days foistered upon us and dignified, forsooth, with the title of philosophy ; such botched and half-fledged experience that presumptuously fancies it sees further into the eternal nature of things than all the wisdom and virtue of antiquity, will certainly ruin civil liberty and turn her out, like a wild beast, for the sport and madness of the multitude. Indeed what are called your free thinkers in both politics and religion, have always been a plague to society at every period of it ; because, acting on the common ignorant mind, they have seduced those from the paths of duty who have no line of guidance but the example of their superiors. Their own ability, we confess, both in France and in this country, (with very few exceptions) have been of the lowest description ; but operating upon ignited materials, the explosion has been seriously detrimental. These philosophers of the free-thinking school affect a higher discernment in the political and religious world of mind than their more sober cotemporaries ; and though their vile, musty arguments have been refuted to very nauseousness, yet do they still vomit them forth amid the gaping multitude, and never daring fairly to meet their adversaries in the field, or to bring their arguments to the test of demonstration, pass for discerning men only because they have the art to conceal their stupidity. These were the characters that fomented and forwarded the revolution in France, and these are the characters that are now playing the same disorganizing and detestable game in England.

And what, gentlemen, are the doctrines, what the objects these philosophical free-thinkers are driving at ? What are they endeavouring to teach us ? From

what oppressions of church or state are they pretending to deliver us, or how are they consulting our comfort? They are teaching us, like their French prototypes, to despise our government, and our rulers; and all that are legally put in authority over us. They are delivering us from the oppression of equal laws and equal liberty; from the persecution of an established religion as mild, as benevolent, as regardful of the conscientious feelings and opinions of its seceding members as it is possible for any religion, invested with an established pre-eminence, to be. They are consulting our happiness by cutting the ties that bind man to his Maker; by persuading us that we must "eat and drink for to-morrow we die;" that we may take our fill of pleasure and prophaneness here, for that there is no hereafter to give us either pleasure or pain. Yes, gentlemen, these are the doctrines of many among our philosophical and political adversaries, both in our own county and in the kingdom; of many that fancy they are giving proofs of superior wisdom at the very moment when the baseness of such a conduct is only to be pardoned for the almost childish state of intellect they evince upon these topics. Still is the vanity of the men equal to every thing but their impiety. They oppose our religious establishments, because it is a proof of their philosophy. They oppose our form of government, because it is a proof of their wisdom. They ridicule our duty of obedience, because it evinces their independence. They calumniate our motives in supporting administration, because it discovers their sagacity, the notable faculty they possess of diving into those secret recesses of our souls which we can often but imperfectly dive into ourselves. The blasting infidelity of these free-thinkers in religion, (who, by the bye, by a very natural kind of attainture, are generally revolutionists in politics,) is a ravening passion that eateth up human virtues in the lump; that is always at its meal and is

never satisfied; that draws towards its tremendous vortex the little, humble yearnings and hopes of its neighbours, and whirls them from sight and recollection; that is not content with its own sin, but divides and multiplies it till it becomes a national iniquity.

I would have our infidel adversaries recollect, and especially the *medical* part of them, who, to the astonishment of common sense, but too often furnish recruits to this army of aliens, that to philosophize in religion is generally to discredit our reason, and, with it, in no small measure, our virtue. Even Apollonius, the able opponent of Porphyry, and a man of almost universal attainments, miserably failed when he applied a speculating turn of mind to the creed of Christianity. A truly learned physician will consider and take in all the common articles of our faith at one view, and will then probably feel disposed to rest in the conclusion of as sound and learned a divine as the church of England ever boasted; that "the system of religion, both natural and revealed, considered only as a system, and prior to the proof of it, is not a subject of ridicule, unless that of nature be so too."* He will know that as anatomy hath ever been regarded as the firmest foundation of that part of medical science which is worth any thing, (for much of it is worth nothing) so Christianity is the only unerring basis of pure and sound philosophy. But, in fact, that which is rejected by these gentlemen, is no more inexplicable than that which is received. The doctrine of the Trinity is not harder of belief than the transmigrations of Pythagoras. When I am told "*sed Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti una est Divinitas, æqualis gloria, coæterna majestas,*" I

* Butler's Introduction to the Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed.

can as easily conceive this as I can any of the common operations of nature, and much more easily than that very mystical one by which plants in the spring are enabled to converse together, and to determine in what manner they shall shoot their branches, and spread their leaves, and conjugate, and bear fruit.* I wish these physicians of the *non sanæ memoriæ* school could be persuaded to renounce such vagaries of an unsettled imagination. We might then hope to erect a beacon for their offspring from the nosology of their own philosophical infirmities. But alas! medical infidelity is, I fear, of too stubborn a cast, too vain a texture to expect from it any such concessions. The Esculapian tribe, tricked out in old Priam's armour, must still be tampering with the *telum imbellè sine ictu*. They must still indulge in lucubrations as much at variance with their own experimental profession as with Christianity itself, and that resemble, in the vivid language of one of their hypothetical brethren, "the beautiful followers of the attitude or statue fashion, who unfortunately do not stiffen into figures like the *Venus de Medicis*, but reduce themselves to a state from which every one turns away with horror, except the stealer of dead bodies and the dissector."† The Scriptures will however, I trust, remain inspired writings, and Christ, a divine person, and the immortality of the soul a

* This discovery, unknown to former times, hath been reserved for the philosophy of the nineteenth century. It behoves Mr. Coke and the Norfolk agriculturists to be careful that their crops, when they get into the ground, hold no rebellious conferences. The extent of the mischief might be alarming, should "thistles spring up instead of wheat and cockle instead of barley." I would recommend this subject to the Rev. T. C. Munnings, who, I believe, hath an aptitude in these matters beyond most other men, and who hath already obliged the learned world with certain well-known *expositions of Norfolk agricultural sagacity*.

† Beddow's Essays.

solemn truth, and the Deity something more than another name for nature, in spite of *Brunonian systems*, *Darwinian Physiology*, the *Philosophy of Medicine*, or the *Loves of the Plants*.

All infidelity hath been held, and I think with good cause, to spring from ignorance and vanity ; from a high conceit of our own poor faculties, and a weak debasement of the excellent common sense of mankind. Indeed all smatterers in science are apt to end in infidelity of some kind or other. Every nation not infested with philosophers, will venerate its established religion and laws. But men of this description, making the Scriptures their derision, (and the more their derision the more they find them in general estimation) and the "*Tractatus Theologico-politicus*," of Spinoza, their text book, are for ever unsettling the common creed and the common polity of the state. How far these obtrusive guides, among ourselves, are Christians, I take not upon me to say, nor how far they may have attained to, or proceeded beyond the confines of mere deism. I suppose if we give them credit for a belief in the five articles of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, it may be as much as they will require, and probably more than they deserve. From whence they derive their notions of deity it would indeed be difficult to tell, whether from Hermes, from Zoroaster, from Pythagoras, or from Plato ; so sedulous are they to hunt and grope about in every place where they have no business. However, let what may make up the *lex et prophetæ* of these omniscient gentry, they ought to recollect that an infidel philosopher has no ground to stand upon, except such as it would shame any one, except an infidel philosopher, to take. The enemies of our faith, like those of our constitution, change merely their mode of attack, and with old arguments repeatedly subverted, are willing to seem to rise up before us in new forms. But the weapons wielded by former

partizans of impiety and disaffection, are those alone that our modern disorganizers have to bring forward. Retaining the same weakness and the same wickedness, the only change we can discover is in their increased confidence and want of shame. What added Hobbes to the infidelity of Lord Herbert, or Blount to that of Hobbes, or Collins to that of Blount; or in what respect were the opinions of the Earl of Shaftesbury increased in aught, save their deformity and perniciousness, by Toland, or Tindal, or Morgan, or Chubb? What new corruption of all faith and morality did the writings of David Hume bring to the stores already prepared for common consumption by my Lord Bolingbroke? Were not the heads of these hydras cut off as fast as they appeared, and seared too with a flaming brand? And yet they followed on the track of each other—and yet one took up the tale of blasphemy where his immediate predecessor had left it—and yet their present servile imitators are working their way among the community, and straining out their new mischiefs as if these old ones, and their infamous broachers, had never been exposed to the contempt and execration of every virtuous mind! Hardened offenders these, who though ready with the imperial apostate to cast their blood towards heaven, and in the mingled agony of conviction and despair to exclaim *vicisti Galilæe, vicisti*, yet packed up their infidelities with them in their coffins, and made no retribution for their enormities to either God or man.*

* The author of the "Religio Medici," wild enough at times, it must be confessed, in his speculations, but frequently imbued with high and solemn thoughts, after remarking that in our study of anatomy there is a mass of mysterious philosophy which reduced even the very heathens to divinity, very beautifully goes on to observe, "I thank God I have not those strait ligaments, or narrow obligations to the world, as to dote on life or be convulst and trem-

Let me intreat these atheistical physicians—for I cannot afford them any milder appellation—seriously to lay to heart the consequences of such examples as they are, some of them, not ashamed to hold out to

ble at the name of death. Not that I am insensible of the dread and horror thereof, or by raking into the bowels of the deceased, continual sight of anatomies, skeletons, or cadaverous relics, like resplloes, or grave-makers, I am become stupid, or have forgot the apprehension of mortality; but that marshalling all the horrors, and contemplating the extremities thereof, I find not any thing therein able to daunt the courage of a man, much less a well resolved Christian. And therefore am not angry at the error of our first parents, or unwilling to bear a part of this common fate, and like the best of them to die, that is, to cease to breathe, to take a farewell of the elements, to be a kind of nothing for a moment, to be within one instant of a spirit. When I take a full view and circle of myself, without this reasonable moderator, and equal piece of justice, death, I do conceive myself the miserablest person extant; were there not another life that I hope for, all the vanities of this world should not intreat a moment's breath from me. Could the devil work my belief to, imagine I could never die, I would not outlive that very thought; I have so abject a conceit of this common way of existence, this retaining to the sun and elements, I cannot think this to be a man, or to live according to the dignity of humanity. In expectation of a better, I can with patience embrace this life, yet in my best meditations do often defy death. I honour any man that contemns it, nor can I highly love any that is afraid of it. This makes me naturally love a soldier, and honour those tattered and contemptible regiments, that will die at the command of a serjeant. For a Pagan there may be some motives to be in love with life; but for a Christian to be amazed at death, I see not how he can escape this dilemma, that he is too sensible of this life, or hopeless of the life to come." This is speaking like a philosophical Christian. This is identifying the sound reflection that "reason pursued is faith." But if we may judge from the Religio Medici of the present day, it would really seem as if to entertain any sense of piety was likely to be destructive of a physician's practice, and that he could no longer hope to pass for a philosopher who had been so indiscreet as to acknowledge himself a Christian. Prejudices these sufficiently at variance with all sober calculation. But what can we expect from men who study Hoyle more than Hippocrates, and who then only recollect their patients when they recollect their poverty?

the world. If religion be man's sweetest consolation under the miseries of life ; if the evils we patiently bear in this world are mitigated by the humble and pious hopes which we entertain of a better, what must we think of those who would deprive us of this consolation ? Nothing can be imagined more revolutionary to all the worthiest feelings of our nature than the efforts of infidelity on an unpractised and innocent mind. It is bringing down the Saviour of mankind from the throne of his glory, once more to be crucified by the work of his own hands. To betray the unsuspecting heart by only the common modes of deception, is crime bad enough for any human being who only suspects that there is a retribution and a world to come. But to draw us from God under the pretence of leading us to happiness—to cut us off from the hope of mercy by persuading us that there is no occasion for mercy—to hinder us from “working out our salvation with fear and trembling ;” by representing all fear for futurity as unneeded and unmanly—to dispel in us the apprehensions of “death, and judgment, and heaven, and hell ;” by, at once, impiously declaring that death is only an eternal sleep, and, of course, judgment, heaven and hell the mere dream of infants or of idiots—thus to seduce us from our duty—thus to sooth us into infidelity—thus to lead us into wickedness—and thus, thus dreadfully, to reconcile us to our guilt.—O it is a depravity beyond the bounds of earthly measure or retribution, and can only hope for forgiveness on that ground which these unhappy beings are hourly cutting up, that most chearing and solemn of all the solemn consolations of holy writ, that *God is love !*

Either a man believes that he is to rise from his grave after death, or he does not. If he does not believe this, why makes he any sacrifices to decorum, to society, to the world he lives in, to the usages,

opinions, practices of that world? Here to day and gone to-morrow, and with "the great winding sheets that bury all things in oblivion" ready to be thrown over him, what need he care about the world? What need he care about those he leaves behind him? Innocent children, it may be, and good; but what of that? Like the plants in his garden they are only to endure for their season. They may flourish and look beautiful in the spring, but presently the blasts of winter will come and "their place shall know them no more!" Why gives the infidel physican an education to his offspring? A mind not to live, and to continue and increase its accessions of knowledge in another state, what matters it how defective it goes out of this? The worm needs not "the porcelain clay of human kind" to riot upon; the common dust will serve its purpose.—Alas! if he is only preparing his children for this short-lived existence; for time and not for eternity; for the grave and not for God, what a tissue of absurdity is every part of his conduct. Why delight in their virtues; why grieve at their imprudence; why rejoice in their prosperities; why distress himself at their misfortunes? There can be no reason where we believe nothing, thus to hope, and to fear, and to tremble at every thing. But, on the other hand, if these medical apostates do think that after this feverish state of being there may possibly come another; if they do suspect, aided only by the wholesome experience of their own profession, that all may not be over with us when life is over, but that, some how or other, the incorruptible seed is still wonderfully preserved when the corruptible body has mingled with its original dust; then are they doing all in their power to rob themselves and their families of the benefits of this awful process for futurity. For surely nothing can be at the same time more preposterous and more profane, than to injure by their wretched

opinions that God and that Saviour, that religion, those doctrines, those duties, and those precepts, upon a firm belief of which all good government, all civilized society, all expectation of comfort here, all hope of happiness hereafter, altogether and entirely rest.

At what period it is that these our free-thinkers intend to become serious, it is hardly possible to divine. We can measure neither their defection from, nor their return to truth and virtue, by any of the ordinary standards of human judgment. In the morning of life they will have nothing to do with religion, for the prospect is bright before them, and vanity is in all its warmth. At noon they immerse themselves in its cares and ambitions, and speculate too deeply upon this world to waste a single thought upon the next. It is only when the shades of evening approach that they can bring themselves to take the slightest, the most distant view of that country "from whose bourn no traveller returns;" and when their sun is about to set, and darkness is closing in upon them, that thick and heavy darkness that may even "be felt," and the business, clothed in characters of fire, comes home to their own bosoms, then, for the first time in their lives, do these degenerate sons of science think seriously about religion, and like poor wretched prisoners panting for release, exclaim with the astonished jailer, "what must I do to be saved?" Alas, these daring philosophers; these self-sufficient, high spirited free-thinkers, who, in the plenitude of their sagacity, sneered at and rejected all creeds alike, now reduced to the last pitiful wrecks of imbecility, hold up withered hands to heaven, and clasp to their bosoms any creed that is offered them; so fearful do they feel it to die the pestiferous fools and mad men they have lived.*

* This tribe of infidels, it seems, we are not likely soon to get rid of. These medical free-thinkers and philosophers, nothing daunted by their perpetual shames, spread like a nuisance through-

Some of these philosophers, though far enough from Christians, are, or affect to be scholars. Surely then even their very classical attainments ought to preserve them from infidelity. For those heathen poets whose works we hold in so deserved an admiration, stealing like Apelles their Olympian Jove from a higher genius, do themselves every where draw from the divine oracles. Trace the course of their haunted streams and you will find them, whether passing by "tower'd cities," or bathing the foot of lonely mountains, or listening with Ilissus to the Grecian sage, or sweetly winding through vales of Tempe and groves of Arcady, *vel quæ loca fabulosus lambit Hydaspes*, all running back with classic elegance to the same sacred fount; all carrying up the imagery of a rich fancy to the supernatural visitings of "the day spring from on high," the widely dispersed but mutilated pandects of our salvation. We can open no page of ancient lore, where, amid the high musings, the vivid colouring, the strangely chastised voluptuousness of

out the land. I make no apology for referring my readers to the Evening Mail of June 4th last, for an excellent letter "To the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons," expressively on this subject. I have seen no reply to it. I know of none indeed that would not be equally indecent with and more insulting than the original publication, the fetidly pernicious nature of which, like the miasmas of the plague, the first paragraph of the letter will abundantly testify. "I presume (says the writer,) it can be no secret to those members of your learned body who did not attend the late lectures on physiology and zoology, delivered by your own professor of anatomy and surgery, that such lectures are now published for the benefit of the world at large; and since I believe no instance has ever occurred before in this professedly Christian country, where infidelity, indecency, and democracy, have been so openly taught from the chair of a public professor, I wish to inquire whether such principles are propounded with your concurrence; and whether it be decent, that in a nation which has not openly renounced the profession of Christianity, the doctrine of *man's annihilation at death* be a fit doctrine to be taught to the pupils at our hospitals, and then printed and published for our common benefit."

the heathen mind, we perceive not the "veil rent in twain," and the solemnity of the scriptures to breathe upon us. Though long tracts of time have rolled away, and darkness is upon the face of our researches, yet do we find their enchanting mythology casting back its shadows into a remote antiquity, and even mixing itself with "the years beyond the flood." Here it is that with a most felicitous adaptation

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,*

and in the midst of "clouds and thick darkness," and unknowing of the invisible hand by which he is led, doth impart to the scattered relics of the Christian faith "a local habitation and a name." The *Iliad* of Homer, the *Theogony* of Hesiod, the *Plays* of Euripides, the *Pollio* of Virgil, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, the *Odes* of Horace, and the *Hymns* of Callimachus, are all full of the divinity; do all glow with inspiration; do all confess, with no view, no intention, and so far as their own consciousness is concerned, no power of confessing "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day, and for ever!" The doctrines, the miracles, the rites and ceremonies, the rewards and punishments of the book of life are all shadowed out, some with a firmer, some with a fainter line, in the pages of the Greek and Roman literature; are all, under one elegant allusion or other, in their philosophy, their history, their poetry, wooing attention and inviting conviction from our very cradle to our graves. And let the literary infidel recollect, if he is determined to be swayed by no other, that the classical evidence for the truth of Christianity will be found, on examination, to be perfect in all its parts, and the heathen writings, one blaze of beauty, a consecration and confirmation of the revealed records!

On the subject, gentlemen, of *the liberty of the*

* *Midsummer-Night's Dream*,

press, to which I must next solicit your attention, it is proper that we should entertain right notions, and be aware how much we herein too differ with our political adversaries, and how little they differ from the French revolutionists, who made a licentious press subservient to their darkest designs. Here it is that we indeed take opposite ground. Our opponents contend for an unlimited freedom of the press; we for a freedom sufficient for the security of our constitution in church and state, but subject, from time to time, to such judicious restraints as contingent circumstances and the welfare of society demand. They are for a press with no checks from policy, none from honour, none from conscience; we for one which sound policy may not disapprove, which honourable minds may flourish under without aspersion, and which the purest conscience may feel to be "void of offence towards God or towards man." We want not to narrow, but to purify freedom of speech. We want not to shake, but to settle on a firmer and more dignified basis this liberty of the press; to purge it of its delinquency and to affianc it with worthier feelings. We see in it, as it is now exercised among us, every thing to dread. It is mixing itself with our highest and with our lowest concerns. Its bold contaminations spread every where, and do not only destroy private peace, but are even proving injurious to the security of the state. No where, no not even in governments of the highest democratical cast, hath this liberty at any time extended so wide, or had so licentious a permission. It has not merely imparted a broader coarseness, a stronger republican defilement to our national manners, but has actually quartered our mutinous tempers with the unprincipled popular spirit that hung like a vulture over Rome previous to its decadency. We are gathering all the declamatory baseness of that unhappy period about us with none of its apology.

In the tyranny, and weakness, and total depravation of their rulers, the people of Rome saw but too just cause for reproach, a reproach which, increasing in bitterness as it spread through the gradations of society, at length gave birth to crimes that exceeded those to which it was opposed. But in this kingdom, glorious beyond all other, and beyond all other unfortunate, with no resemblance to these regal despots, save in their estimation who fancy deformity wherever they behold monarchy, we have, alas! every resemblance to their plebeian phrenzies!

Nothing is of deadlier effect than the wilful misrepresentations of the press; nothing of deeper corruption to the fealty of the subject than its prophane and malicious calumnies. No topic of discussion or conversation is treated of as it is. The entertainment of the worst opinions and the perpetration of the worst deeds go under the fairest names. To lessen the influence of the crown is generally the pretext for unsettling the popular mind and advancing the popular principle. To reform the parliament has a meaning little short of ruining the state. To moderate episcopal power is no other than to swell out sectarian presumption; and to set the people free must almost universally be understood as an intimation to bind every rank in chains which is but one remove above the people. The harm that lurks beneath these specious subterfuges we have not yet learnt to calculate. To be attached to the constitution of our country certainly is not blameable. To be admirers of that revolution which justly drove one sovereign from his throne and quietly seated another in it, is a mark of our affection to all and every part of the British government which that revolution sanctified; is such a mark as any man bearing about with him may be known for an Englishman in any quarter of the globe. But under the semblance of this attachment to be daily working its ruin; under a feigned admiration

for its principles to be hourly disturbing all its finest springs and undermining its firmest foundations, is villainous. Such deceptive characters, gentlemen, are abroad. They infest the land. Fix your attention piercingly upon them, and the glance of Uriel will presently discover on some mount of Niphates, the perturbations and disfigurements of these enemies of the human race.

The disorganizing state of our press is however, I should hope, at its height. Our adversaries seem to measure virtue before they attack her, and then attack her in such vital parts and with such instruments as will best secure, at the same instant, her defilement and her destruction. Their means are suited to their ends. The very language they use is scarce a whit inferior in abomination to their calumnious sentiments. We see too every thing, even of the most sacred cast, clothed in a ludicrous garb; every person spoken of in a ludicrous manner; every character a caricature, and exhibited to the gazing ignorant eye in positions and under circumstances the most debasing. This corrupting misrepresentation, mixed with a broad humour, circulates through all the pores of the literary community. It begins with our infidel and dissenting periodical works, and ends in its last fulsome ramifications, with the indecent trash hawked about the streets of almost every city and town in the kingdom. All have their cartoons of calumny; their buffoonical scenery; their untempered ridicule of persons and things. The literary world itself scarcely knows what it would be at. They rummage language for the expression of thoughts that have never before entered the human mind, and feelings that never pervaded the human heart. Both the subject and the phraseology must be clad in a drapery that has not seen the light. A celebrated poet of the present day has led the way in this crusade against the common conceptions of our nature, and has been followed by a host of imita-

tors, who are fain, like their prototype, to dispense with human shapes and sentiments, and to assume a preternatural port, mixed with the most piteous ignorance, the most brutal and prophane infidelity.

The state of the press in every country will pretty well tell us the state of the people. From what they consent to countenance and read, we may prophesy how things are like to go with them. On this ground we have, I fear, many changeful and alarming marks about us. In every production of the press, every disorderly meeting of the people, every speech delivered by demagogue orators, the demoralizing system is the order of the day. To the word principle the multitude are taught to give any or no meaning, as may best comport with the designs of their leaders; and they are instructed to turn this loose and lax instrument in whatever direction will be most valuable. The shaking of fixed virtuous feelings is, as their instigators well know, the best preparation of the mind for revolution; for revolution with neither the probability, nor even the thought of reform about it. Once destroy principle, and men have no reason for being virtuous, nor any obstructions to indulging in vice; nothing to lead them to the distinction between what is criminal and what is innocent. The mark which God and conscience have set upon them is washed out, though so deeply were these characters engraven, that one should have thought they bid fair to have gone down with them to the grave. The destruction of principle therefore is the overthrow of that moral order which is the life of society, and the confusing of principle which the press so studiously and systematically aims at, the great step towards its extermination. It behoves us then to settle in our own, and in the minds of all about us those permanent barriers of right and wrong.

Liberty is indeed a glorious possession and never enough to be revered. I love to see liberty gay and

happy, and fearless in the midst of her happiness. I love to see her the grace and ornament of the British constitution; the sweetner of society; the crown of our cups in the convivial hour. There is no existing without liberty, there is no enjoyment; there is nothing that a generous soul would care to live for where liberty is extinct. But then this same liberty must use no preternatural excitements. She must not play the wanton. She must not trick herself out in the harlotry of licentiousness, and, "flown with insolence," set aside all decorum and "pluck justice by the nose" at once. There is no occasion for any nobler professions of independence, any fuller feelings of liberty than those which our established constitution authorizes and teaches. He who would take higher ground than this must take French ground. But that is not liberty which defames government in all its branches, and there most defames it where it most deserves applause—that is not liberty which pours contempt upon every order of the state and puts the church under perpetual ban and anathema—that is not liberty which fills the common ear with dark reports, and the common mind with foul disaffections, and the whole kingdom with dangerous seditions and daring thoughts of revolution. If freedom of speech and the liberty of the press are to go thus far, for a most poor and wretched purpose, have our ancestors shed their blood and laid out their souls for posterity; even for the purpose of encouraging every mutinous spirit to pour forth his fulminations at his pleasure, and, under the mask of public good, to destroy all good, whether public or private.

Revolution at a distance? How should it be at a distance when this "sin lieth at the door?" Give us a licentious, unrestrained press, and let us escape revolution if we can. But do we not, gentlemen, every where see this licentiousness triumphant, and every

where, where it is triumphant, followed by seductions of the worst kind and slanders of the deadliest nature. All that is vile it deifies. All that is good it murders. All that makes for the reverence of the sovereign, the security of the realm, or the obedience and happiness of the subject, it stamps with disdain or reprobation ; while whatever unhinges or disturbs society, whatever sets one man against another and every man against the government under which he lives, it sanctifies by a terrible ungodliness. In the reserved stores of rebellion, there is no instrument of disorganization so effectual, so every way to be dreaded, as an uncontrolled press. It elicits, from the dark womb of our nature, all our original corruptions. It arouses and puts them into motion, and keeps up therewith a perpetual ferment in the state. It leads on through dark channels to misrepresentation, to calumny, to cruelty, to death. It stabs alike in secret and in the face of the sun, and the more honourable its victim, the blacker its soul and the more atrocious its assassination. The press, in short, in its present state, is becoming in this country what it was in France, an ostracism reaching to the very lowest depths of debasement, with a hardened feeling at enmity with all notions of heroic vice, and that has not even the nobleness of villainy to recommend it. It was the anti-room to the presence chamber of the guillotine in that devoted country, and God only knows what it will turn out in this. One thing we feel assured of, that nothing, well regulated, can exceed it as a blessing, nor, without regulation, can any thing go beyond it as a curse. That is no press to boast of which is released from an *imprimatur* by the state of public morals. A crown of laurel upon a death's head is not a more glaring and terrific object.

Freedom of sentiment is in this favoured country seldom disturbed, until it lead to the extirpation of all order and obedience. Our state prosecutions of a

highly seditious populace and a licentious press have terminated unfortunately. They have turned out all that the friends of virtue lament, and all that its enemies could wish for. Our error consisted not, I think, in the impeachment of persons and publications that carried sedition and blasphemy throughout all their pages and conduct, but in laying our accusations too high, and thus risking their being frittered away not by disaffection, but rather by (a godlike failing) humanity in our juries. To deprive man of that life which the Creator hath given him is, temporally considered, such a punishment as surely no crime can warrant but that of murder or treason—of murder and treason so evident as to come home, without the shadow of suspense, to the entire conviction of every bosom. Sedition is a smaller offence; it is more easily proved; it is punished with greater acquiescence of the public mind, and usually with sufficient effect. I am not, I confess, among the number of those who would cast any reflection upon the juries through whose verdict the late state prisoners were acquitted, nor even upon their decisions, still more to be lamented, to which Mr. Hone owes his exemption from a punishment which he so richly merited.* The trial by jury is a noble privilege, and

* The extensive subscriptions set on foot for this man throughout the kingdom might be well insisted upon as a proof, and no mean one, of the prevailing bad spirit of the times. These subscriptions were a reward (under the pretence of aiding and remunerating him for the persecutions of government) for impiety and blasphemy, and for endeavouring to bring the doctrines of the established church into contempt. The description of persons too in whom this wretched spirit is discoverable is hereby plainly intimated; for among these subscribers we shall find a very large proportion of dissenters of various denominations, and of every party, however designated, adverse to the measures of government and to our constitution in church and state. It is needless to add, that every revolutionist (with the means and the spirit) will be

we must be careful, gentlemen, how we bring it into discredit, or how we arraign its determinations even at the tribunal of our most secret thoughts. It stands as a guardian angel over the subject's freedom and happiness, and holds in its hands the power of life and death. I will not easily believe that it slumbers over its awful charge. I will still less believe that its spirit is corrupted by the corrupting spirit of the times. It is of human institution and of human composition, and may therefore err. It has erred often, God knows, and grievously.* But if ever there was a moment in the life of man when his honour was at the highest, his faith at the highest, his conscience and the solemnity of his own feelings of futurity at the highest, that moment is, when, calling upon the Almighty to witness that he will act righteously, he puts his hand upon his heart and pronounces his brother of the dust—guilty or not guilty! O never let us suspect the integrity of this last refuge of our injured country, of our injured fellow creatures, for there can be no hope left us where that holy hope fails us.†

found in the same rolls of infamy. If the *Whig* part of the county of Norfolk and the city of Norwich did not take the lead in this shameful business, they, at least, cordially joined hand in hand with the citizens of Westminster. They clubbed their proportions of wit and wiliness.

* Of this, the execution of innocent persons that has, at various times, taken place, is a melancholy proof. A late execution at Norwich, (that of *James Johnson*) though it certainly cannot be added to the number, had yet peculiar circumstances about it. At the time I was inclined to attach some importance to them, more probably than I ought; nor have I even yet entirely divested my mind of the impressions then made upon it. The relation of this awful event, in the *Norwich Mercury* of March 28, 1818, is correctly, I think, given, and deserves perusal.

† It is to be regretted that the members of our lower House should frequently be so little guarded in their reflections upon public measures, knowing that all such reflections will be laid be-

At the same time it cannot be too much regretted, that oaths should be proffered and taken in our courts of justice with so little solemnity and with apparently so perfect an indifference as, for the most part, they are. I should be glad to know what security we have for life, or property, or national safety, when this guardian of them all is so unsanctified in its usage. There hath ever been impressed on the human mind, and for the last purposes of human necessity, a strong feeling of God Almighty's omniscience, a strong and awful feeling. But our neglects herein have gone high to destroy this feeling. Where falls the censure? Where but on our courts themselves, on our magistrates, on our judges, on all that countenance, all that connive at this unsolemnizing of the dread appeal of man to his Maker, this destruction of the subject's reliance on the jurisprudence of the country. When oaths are administered to, and taken by the poor and ignorant in any other than the most impressive manner, it is treason against heaven and the signal for tribulations upon earth. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." Yes—the fear of God must be upon the mind of the witness; the terrors of God must wrap themselves round his heart; the very form of God must stand before him. His soul, in a situation, so

fore, and will considerably influence the public mind. In the debate on the *Foreign Enlistment Bill*, June 21st, an honorable member is reported (*Evening Mail*) as remarking, "thank God it yet remains to be seen whether a British jury will assist the government in enforcing such a law as was now attempted to be enforced upon the people." Lord Castlereagh's answer was at once dignified and convincing. "He felt confident that a British jury would not swerve from its duty. Englishmen placed in such an awful situation would recollect the sacred oath they had taken, and would not be influenced by any suggestions, either from within or from without the walls of Parliament. Nothing, he was convinced, would induce a British jury to forget that sacred obligation."

awfully responsible, must put on all her righteousness. The judge, the court, the criminal, the applause, the reprobation that may follow, all must be annihilated. His business, silent and collected, is with his conscience alone. He must "speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so help him God!" And thus acquitting himself, God *will* help him, and man will praise him, and society, in all her gradations, will "rise up and call him blessed;" for then will "an oath for confirmation be an end to strife," and our courts of justice below become an awful transcript of that great and terrible day above, when "God shall judge the secrets of all hearts," and absolve or condemn accordingly.

Another fearful resemblance, gentlemen, we have to the French revolution *in the present assimilation of all parties among us adverse to government, and all holding opinions at perfect contradiction with those espoused by ourselves.* These instruments of revolt are every where growing upon our hands. It is a combination of heterogeneous materials, for Whigs, and Reformers, and Anarchists are brought together, and on many occasions are acting together, some through design, some through ignorance, some out of a vain and idle love of popularity, and some from a perverse destructive party spirit. This portion of my Letter you will suffer me to recommend to your notice. It is mainly connected with our interest. It is entirely connected with our duty; with that part of it especially which appertaineth to us as freeholders.

Without going nicely into the origin and definition of political titles,* which is ever a labour more curious

* On this subject I beg leave to subjoin an opinion very much to the purpose, and which I think may be considered as speaking the sentiments of a large proportion of rational, sober, and constitutional politicians. "For my own part I regard the terms Whig and Tory as party distinctions which have long become obsolete,

than useful, there was a time when what is called Whig principles were principles that no Englishman need to have been ashamed of. The Whig aristocracy was once a valuable part of the British senate. It was that part of the nation which at the period of the revolution of 1688, when every wandering stream was stopped in its progress and made to wind back and settle in its former channels, supported those constitutional principles which were then consolidated by a grave and dignified wisdom, and that establishment and connection in church and state which was presumed to be considered by all parties, whether Whig or Tory, as the best pattern for future legislators, and as the surest defence against future innovations and aggressions. This, gentlemen, was the morning sun of Whiggism, and the nation, proud of their exertions and happy in their counsels, sufficiently, and even beyond sufficiency, repaid their services

and as of no use whatever in their revival by our opponents, except for the purpose of gaining popularity for themselves, and of throwing an odium on any one whose family may formerly have belonged to the Tory party. If I were asked whether I am Whig or Tory, my answer would be that I am neither. I admire the constitution of 1688; and, as it was then established, I wish to preserve it. My principles, and those of my honourable relative, are to maintain the due prerogatives of the crown, and the just rights of the people. Whether these are the characteristics of a Whig or of a Tory I care not; it is sufficient for me to know that they are Pitt principles." See the speech of the Hon. Col. Wodehouse, on the celebration of Mr. Pitt's birth-day, May 28, 1817. *Norfolk Chronicle*, May 31.—It were to be wished that these celebrations should be kept up with sufficient spirit, and that all future presidents would follow the example of Lord Bayning, who observed, upon his being proposed for the chair on the next meeting, that "no trifling circumstance should deter or detain him from being at his post." Situated indeed as we are, I can hardly conceive a post of higher honour. I am happy to find, from so correct authority, "that the majority of the respectable inhabitants of *Yarmouth* are firm supporters of Mr. Pitt's principles."

See *Norwich Mercury*, June 5, 1819.

by large returns of gratitude. I say beyond sufficiency, for evermore restless in their minds, embued with loose and dissentient notions, they suffered not even the reign of William to pass without dipping their hands in convulsionary movements. And though at this period they were certainly possessed of considerable influence, it does not appear that they used it as men altogether intent on the good of their country, nor that they enjoyed any very permanent degree of estimation with either that monarch or with his immediate successor.

Its popularity with the nation continued indeed somewhat longer ; but no very equivocal symptoms of decline soon began to show themselves. Year by year it continued, with a bad blood which no alteratives were able to purify, in a sickening degenerate state, dying to all noble endeavours and alive only to party feud and political animosity ; till in the beginning of the present reign it arrived at its "iron age," and hating to side with either Toryism in the state or orthodoxy in the church, it even ventured to coalesce with democracy and dissent. So dreadfully indeed did it fall into eclipse, that, sooner than enjoy the light with better spirits and purer associates, it at once precipitated itself into the darkness of despair, and lived by those means that corrode and eat away life in all besides. Gentlemen, the history of the reign of George III. will abundantly convince you what the Whig party and Whig principles in this country have been and have produced. If they have been good for little for a long time past, I fear we shall not find them much mending upon our hands. They are active spirits and ever grumbling, and active spirits seldom lie idle, and disaffected tempers are rarely without their manœuvres. Where men deal in contraband wares they must navigate under false colours. The Whigs work under colour of the constitution, and the anarchists under that of reform ; and they may

probably, at length, meet in that mournful point where the one will see their error with no power of rectifying it and the other glory in their craftiness and their crime.

We recollect, gentlemen, the fate of the society assuming to itself the title of "the friends of the people." This society, which boasted of eminent names, had for its object a parliamentary reform. At the time it was probably, with many of its members, an honest object. But to what sad abuses did it lead in the consequent formation of other societies; and how little does it appear that these friends of the people, pure as might have been their motives, consulted the tranquillity and happiness of the realm in countenancing the corresponding societies that were springing up, under the influence of French opinions and the presumed rights of men, in every part of the kingdom. I wish the moderate constitutional Whigs of this nation, whom I consider as a remnant of the genuine stock, would learn a present lesson from past experience and reflect upon the situation in which they stand. Those among them who have no inordinate passion for popularity to gratify, no stubbornness of attachment to party to consult, no systematic opposition to ministry (which goes very near to an unprincipled opposition) to warp their feelings or to seduce their judgment, have it in their power to be very efficient members of community, and very noble friends to their country at this time. They are, and they ought so to consider themselves, in a situation of peculiar solemnity. All eyes are fixed upon them; all voices cry unto them. The present is a contest, positively it falls nothing short of it, between monarchy and republicanism; between the principles of dissent, religious and political, and those of assent and consent. The scales are nearly on the balance, and it is their influence that may determine which shall finally preponderate. Both the contending

parties are watchful for the event. The friends of government, the aristocracy, and the great landed proprietors of the realm, with nearly the whole body of the established clergy, earnestly implore that they would make common cause with them against a common enemy, an enemy more subtle, more treacherous, more systematically powerful than ever yet leagued against the government of England: while the dissenters, the reformers, the revolutionists, together with the whole band of infidel philosophers, seditious lecturers, vile demagogues, needy speculators, idle mechanics, and the growing mass of the ignorant, the vicious, the poisoned part of our population, are bribing them with "holy vows" to stand up for (adopting the language in vogue) the rights of their fellow creatures and the renovation of constitution in church and state. Some, as we shall see, have attended to this frenzied call; some modern Whigs, gentlemen, of our own county, from whom we should have hoped better things and a wiser and more dignified conduct. The greater part, however, I trust of our landed possessors and men of property will be careful how they consent to increase, by their countenance, this Thracian uproar, or to mix their consenting voices with these Bacchanalian orgies.

If, gentlemen, they who call themselves Whigs be really assimilating in their sentiments, and language, and cast of conduct, with all the coarse and violent spirits of the age, you will acknowledge that such Whigs are not only no objects of our respect, but are really men whom, in prudence, we can neither chuse for the representatives of our counties and cities, nor trust in any of our concerns, religious, moral, or political. They may not be an unprincipled, but they are a serious and most pernicious enemy to the state; a serious enemy, because they cast the weight of their influence and domestic virtues into the scale of those adversaries to our church and state, who are,

for the more part, destitute of either; a pernicious enemy, because without their countenance and encouragement the anarchists and revolutionists could not so lead the popular mind and prevail against the sober sense of the country. Let us then enquire whether some resemblance between them, (I wish it may not be too near a one) may not be traced in the doctrines which they appear respectively to advocate, and the language which they employ. It is a mere desultory calendar of their mutual pretensions to the public approbation that I am about to set before you, but it will, I doubt, too well serve the melancholy purpose for which I consent to stain these pages with quotations of such a cast.

In the first place then Mr. Coke, of Holkham, and Mr. Gale Jones, of Westminster, both assure us, the one in his constitutional appeals at the Shire-hall, Norwich, and the other in his inflammatory harangues at Norfolk-street, in the Strand, delivered, as it should seem, for the very purpose of exciting a disposition to revolution, "that it was the question of taxation without representation that lost us America."* A natural consequence of this doctrine is that we may probably soon have our unrepresented places claiming, like their rebellious prototypes, to legislate for themselves. Mr. Coke is indeed working one way and Mr. Gale Jones another; but their political compasses are both stretched pretty nearly to their verge, are both of kindred metal, and both point to the same fixed star in the North, that part of the empyreum in which the bee-hive flag of liberty may be expected first to be descried. Again, Mr. Counsellor Phillips, in the style of oratory peculiar to that gentleman, quiets the Irish mob in their late outrage upon Mr. Grattan, by means almost as unjustifiable,

* Star, July 2, 1818.

and language quite as abhorrent to English feelings as that which he affects to reprehend. He addresses them in behalf of "the man of the people," standing by "the son of that glorious Charlemont" whom he emphatically calls "the nobleman of the people." He bids them "remember 1782—remember the period of the abominable union."* Is this a recipe for quelling, or for raising an Irish insurrection? It might do its momentary work in rescuing the man of the people, but it would go a very little way in securing the sceptre of the realm.

Another worthy gentleman of the Whig school, disclaiming every thing for the honour of connecting himself with the majesty of the people, (one of their prime doctrines which I shall presently consider) assures the Westminster mob, that "the title prefixed by courtesy to his name, (the *Honourable* Douglas Kinnaird) could not alter his connection with them."† Again, "the hearts of the people, says Mr. Plunkett, were with me, and to this I owe every thing."‡ Alderman Wood declares, that "his cause was theirs, and that his whole life should be spent in the cause of the people."§ Mr. Cleary assures his hearers, that "it would be an abandonment of the principles which they professed, and for the last ten years steadily acted upon, to return as their representative any but a radical reformer, determined, like Sir Francis Burdett, to fight the people's cause, on the ground of universal freedom."|| The speeches of Mr. Bruce go very near to assimilate the feelings of the Whigs with the conduct of the reformers. He first details, in glowing language, the acts of what is denominated "the most corrupt and profligate parliament that ever disgraced the history of this country," ¶ and the partizans of these reform-

* Star, July 4.

§ Ibid, June 23.

† Ibid, June 26.

‡ Ibid, June 24.

§ Ibid, June 29.

¶ Ibid, June 27.

ers follow it up by deeds as gross and brutal as such language is naturally calculated to inspire. Mr. Bruce "relied upon that spirit which had made Westminster what it is—upon that bold and liberal spirit which had made England the wonder of the world."* The favourite doctrine, however, of these Whig reformers and reforming revolutionists is carried to its *ne plus ultra* by Mr. Hunt, who scruples not to identify, at once, with the majesty of the people the majesty of the very throne itself. "The man, says he, that lives there (Carlton-house) is one of the people, and I am for all the people."†

In their doctrines as to parliamentary reform this political triumvirate somewhat differ. The Whigs are for triennial parliaments, the reformers for annual, combined with universal suffrage, and the revolutionists for no parliaments at all. Upon the new church too to be erected when the old church is down, there may, I dare say, be some dissonance of sentiment, though the probability I think is, that a religious house of no description would be long suffered to contaminate the soil. Mr. Sturch, dividing persons in this country into two classes, asserts that "one of these classes consisted of those who considered the people nothing; who would have them to believe that kings and priests were made to ride on them, for the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them."‡ The Honourable Mr. Kinnaird, in a case of reading the riot act, declares "that he attributed it more to the good conduct of the people, than of the magistrates, that the city had not become a scene of blood."§ Mr. William Smith, of Norwich, in voting for Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir Francis Burdett, "whose names he was happy to

* Star, June 27.

† Ibid, June 30.

‡ Ibid, June 17.

§ Ibid, July 1.

join on such an occasion,"* tells this same Westminster mob, "that he could not quarrel with a man who had done so much good for a little transgression."* Sir Francis himself affirms (which I presume is no transgression at all) "I shall at all times be ready zealously to co-operate with my fellow citizens of Westminster, and the rest of my countrymen, for the purpose of checking that system of fiscal spoliation and political corruption, which takes his due reward from the poor, his inheritance from the rich, and liberty from all."† Further, our members of parliament are considered as "persons falsely calling themselves representatives of the people."‡ Our administration is denounced as pre-eminently factious.‡ Annual parliaments and universal suffrage are advocated as "the establishment of the rights of the people."§ Our very courts of law are not suffered to escape the rancorous misrepresentation of these reformers. The poor are told that even in our highest courts of law "they wanted the assistance of humane, disinterested, enlightened, and able friends."||

These, gentlemen, are bold expressions, and evince, I think, some similarity between the various parties bandied against government. Indeed it must be carefully recollected, that when men colleague with improper associates it is no easy matter to shake them off. If we will prop up a party whose virtues have been found to decay with time by instruments that never boasted of any virtue, we know the consequence. Both Banquo and his murderers must be cast into the same ditch, or "Macbeth shall sleep no more." That the points of relationship between our present Whigs and our "Radical Reformers," or Ultras, or Revolutionists, call them what you will; for no name we can give

* Star, June 30.

† Ibid, June 22.

‡ Ibid, June 20.

§ Ibid, June 29.

|| Ibid, June 27.

them will do any offence to their nature, are not altogether the dream of fancy, may be further evidenced from the mutual feelings they entertain for each other, from the opinions which these ultras themselves have of their brother Whigs, and from the manner in which their high mightinesses, the sovereign people, think and speak of them all. The "letter of Thomas Cleary, Esq. to Henry Hunt, Esq." will pretty well prove to what extent the friends of Sir Francis Burdett, "the reformers of England," are preparing to go. That letter, gentlemen, which you will find wherever you find a newspaper, I recommend to your especial perusal. Mr. Coke, our worthy county representative, you know thinks it an honor to identify himself and his cause with Mr. William Smith, our no less worthy city member—Mr. William Smith is willing to identify himself with Sir Francis Burdett—Sir Francis identifies himself with Mr. Cleary—Mr. Cleary with the aforesaid Henry Hunt, Esq.—Henry Hunt, Esq. with Gale Jones, Esq.—and you need not, I think, be told that Gale Jones, Esq. connects this illustrious list of patriots with all that are to be bought or sold, seduced or influenced, at the discretion of every "village Hampden" throughout the kingdom. Indeed nearly the whole of the enemies of government, spring they from what "dens and caves of the earth" they may, are determined, it seems, to inlist under the same banners. The *orbis magnus* of disaffected spirits all rally round the celebrated Whig Reafen, woven with magic incantations that prognosticate the success or failure of their varied enterprizes.

It seems indeed that the pulse of our modern Whigs was so well understood by their ultra brethren, that they had even thoughts of "consulting them what was best to be done to afford assistance to the *unfortunate* Derby men."* I think (says Mr. Cleary, in his afore-

* Star, June 30.

said commendatory epistle to H. Hunt, Esq.) "I think the Whigs feel some anxiety about the issue of the present trials: an acquittal would afford them excellent matter for speechifying against ministers, and therefore, it is I fancy they would readily assist if an application was made to them. *Something of this kind is partially under consideration.*"* Mr. Cleary may not have been very wide of the mark; but that power which often frustrates alike the fairest schemes and the foulest expectations, providentially ordained that, in this instance, the necessity of Whig eloquence should be superseded by the eloquence of the halter. As for the mob, all are fish that come to their net. They have no lines of political distinction by which to determine who are Whigs, who Reformers, who Revolutionists. They look only to their language and their sentiments, and the manner in which they bear themselves, and if these be in unison with their wishes, the rest goes for nothing. And most completely did they find them thus in unison on a late occasion, when "the lion of Westminster" became "the wild boar of the forest;" when every thing that could be said to stir up rebellious movements was said, and when those "despots who subjugate the morals of empires," and with them their might, "surrounded the hustings with a ruffian mob, till the real electors were disabled from proceeding to a poll, and this they had the audacity to call freedom of election."† Yes, these Whig bellowers for freedom, if you would know what they mean by the word, see what they insist upon as freedom where their own interest is concerned.

The ties that unite these Whigs with their reforming and revolutionary compeers, I believe to be, in the estimation of the people, a sort of holy ties, and many of their leaders have even no objection that

* Star, June 30.

† Ibid, July 17.

they should be so considered. "The friends of Sir Samuel Romilly had never proposed him in opposition to Sir Francis Burdett—to *connect* him with Sir Francis ought to be the object of the people of Westminster."* Sir Samuel must therefore, had it pleased Providence to have spared him, have gone to the house as the political tutor of "England's hope and Westminster's pride," it being "a great object to have an able arguer, a powerful detector of sophistry, to assist Sir Francis Burdett in his parliamentary exertions."* Further, Mr. Sturch tells the Westminster freeholders, in the very presence and hearing of Sir Samuel, that "the men whom they had elected would endeavour to procure the reform in the house of commons, which had been so long wanted; and they would both, no doubt, return to them with the heart-felt consciousness that they had served their constituents faithfully and zealously, and that they had not done their own business, but that of their constituents. He knew it was their desire that the names of Burdett and Romilly should be long connected in Westminster as those of the friends of freedom and humanity."† These expressions, gentlemen, as they are here used, you will perceive binds up with better company the Burdetts, the Clearys, the Cobbets, the Waithmans, and all that follow in their train, and insult the authorities and infest the liberties of their country. All are considered as equally "friends to freedom;" all are "friends to reform;" all "champions for liberty," and all bowers of the head and benders of the knee to the same darling idol of their seduction, the supreme Majesty of the people.

And before this mockmob majesty well have they played their parts and highly have they deserved of

* Star, June 24.

† Ibid, July 6.

them. Better preparations for revolution than those with which they have favoured us I know not where we are to find, nor fitter occasions for the exercise of that spirit which is adverse to all order. Take a few samples of the hardened assurance and falsehood of these daring reformers. The exercise of a right common to all they reprobate in words too plain to be mistaken. "The bold and daring effrontery which had brought the minister of the crown, Lord Castle-reagh, to these hustings, to support the system of prostitution in the face of the people, was the proper object of their disgust. Doubtless, they felt strongly this insult; they even would, he trusted, manifest an unconquerable reprobation against the system of despotism which he had brought from Ireland to this country. To Ireland he was now gone, and if public opinion and public feeling had free expression there, he would not soon return hither."* Such is their denunciation of the man to whom his country is so eminently indebted for her present security. Very different is their language when speaking of one of the greatest nuisances that ever defiled the British empire. "The aged faltered his good deeds—the tongue of the infant lisped his praise—many with tears admired him—all expressed that he was the man, without whom they could not consider themselves represented."* There are few public characters that boast not of some private virtues, and Sir Francis Burdett is certainly not without his; but this strain of demagogue adulation is assuredly of too high a cast. Thus it is however that they "travel up" to the fame of their great leaders. Can again any thing be of a more incendiary complexion than the following allusion to the nobleman above mentioned. "When he (Mr. Cleary), who was an Irishman,

* Star, June 25.

thought of such a man, nature, true to herself, suggested no other sentiment than that of deep-felt execration. He was but a boy when the Castlereagh system developed itself in his unfortunate country, but its horrors left a recollection that could never be forgotten. His tortures, his half-hangings, his pitched caps, the flagillated backs of his victims; the lamentations of widows and ruined orphans had cried to heaven for retribution, and would yet be heard. Indeed it would be almost, as an eloquent countryman of his had justly said, an argument against the moral government of an all-wise Providence, if the author of such misdeeds escaped the punishment he so richly merited.”* Well might the response of *Oh God!* burst from the souls of the surrounding mob.—Coupling this with other dark prophetic denunciations, can we be surprized if new Feltons and Bellingfields should spring up in this devoted land? Rather let us wonder that any part of the empire is free from them. In stirring up the people they seem not to care to what desperate lengths they go. It was only natural that horrid execrations should follow upon the sailor’s shewing his back that had, as he affirmed, been mangled by the punishment inflicted on him by Sir Murray Maxwell. And when, long after Sir Murray appeared on the hustings, it excited, we are told, even “the fierce and savage feelings of the crowd.” Clenched fists were presented at him, furious language, threats of the strongest nature, and yells scarcely human, so that the police had “infinite difficulty in preserving him from the fury of the populace, who had worked themselves up into a ferocity approaching to madness.”† Here, gentlemen, we see as in a mirror giving us the future in the present, what even the first approaches of a

* Star, June 25.

† Ibid, June 23.

revolution in England must lead to. In vain did Mr. Ellis exclaim, "I have lived in the same ship with Sir Murray Maxwell for months, and I am therefore anxious to repel from my own knowledge the charge of cruelty which has been preferred against him. I believe there never existed a man who more happily tempered the necessary strictness of naval discipline with the affection of a parent."* In vain towards the wretch that so brutally struck at and injured him, did Captain Maxwell exercise the greatest forbearance and humanity. In vain was a joint protestation offered in proof of that humanity.† It was not the vindication of character these demagogues aimed at, but the confounding of character. It was not the pacifying, but the incensing of the mob that seemed to be their object. All bad arts for that purpose were resorted to, and no symptom of regret evinced but for the want of their success.

It is not necessary ; it is far from my wish to saddle upon every indiscreet espouser of the measures of reform designs of this atrocious nature. It is quite enough that we see, and that our opponents themselves, under the impartial exercise of their discernment, must acknowledge to what such measures, advocated by such men, such bitter revilings of the friends of good order and government, are rapidly leading. If in a mere common election we are to look for these examples of brutality, (and the list of them might be increased almost *ad libitum*) what must be expected in seasons of larger commotion? Do you think, gentlemen, the mob would not then among us, as they did in France, take as their law and gospel, all that, for the narrowest vilest purposes, these Whig and ultra orators have told them of the oppressions of government, and of the hypo-

* Star, June 25.

† Ibid, June 29.

crisy and villainy of those who, without any purer views than to their own emolument, support government? Do you think, after having so repeatedly listened to these inflammatory harangues and declarations, they will with us, any more than with our Gallic neighbours, be argued into reason, or soothed into obedience by the alarmed and recanting feelings of those who set them on? If revolution and rebellion do not take place in the present circumstances of the times; if the people are virtuous enough to resist rising in arms against their rulers, after such continued and dreadful calls upon them to rise, I shall be surprized indeed. Disaffected? How is it possible, under the influence of all these demoralizing principles, bottomed upon the *si populus vult decipi decipiatur*, and working night and day, and night and day increasing in guilt and blackness, that the whole kingdom should not be disaffected? How is it possible that these poor deluded creatures should escape, placed by their poverties and their ignorance in the very furnace of temptation? Such deceivers as they are hourly exposed to, at once plausible and unprincipled in their means and dreadful in their views, would go near to cause the very angels to rebel in heaven.

Gentlemen, let us discard fanciful opinions, and make a due estimate of the Whigs of the present day;* of those Whigs who, forsaking their genuine

* How far Mr. Hume's definition of Whig and Tory may do for the present day, I must leave my readers to determine. "A Tory, (says he, Essay 8) since the revolution, may be defined in a few words, to be a lover of monarchy, tho' without abandoning liberty; and a partizan of the family of Stuart. As a Whig may be defined to be a lover of liberty, tho' without renouncing monarchy; and a friend to the settlement in the protestant line." Of one thing I am certain, that if the historian's description of his Whig friends be accurate, the house of Hanover is a very ungrateful house, and must compleatly have changed sides and affec-

principles and the more moderate men of their own party, join the horse's neck to the human head, and (as they have been lately described) "with laurels in their hats and brickbats at their heels," strengthen their hostile spirit against government by a coalition as disgraceful as it is unnatural. That they are not altogether the pure patriots they would pass for, is evident from the opinions entertained of them by both friends and foes. We think them, in their high protestations of a superior concern for the good of their country, to be no other than errant counterfeits;* and even those who are in the habit of consulting, and counselling, and making common cause with them, find, it seems, ample room for both suspicion and censure. Indeed their brethren of the trade appear to be perfectly acquainted with their incongruities of character. Thus Mr. Clark complains, that "the Whigs had not acted so well as he could wish.—They, the reformers, wanted not so much a reform of, as a reform in, the house of commons. The Whigs would be content if they could oust their opponents from the treasury bench."† Mr. Hunt, that animated Whig of the new school, has favoured us with an opinion which we shall probably experience to carry some degree of authority with it. "He

tions in the present day; a circumstance not well to be accounted for, on the supposition that these Whigs are now what they were at that period.

* We seem called upon, in the present day, to believe in the purity of Whig principles, on much the same ground that the merchant of Toledo was required to make confession that there was not, in the universe, a more beautiful damsel than the Empress of La Mancha. "Had I once (said the valorous Knight) shewed you that beauty, what wonder would it be to acknowledge so notorious a truth? the importance of the thing lies in obliging you to believe it, confess it, affirm it, swear it, and maintain it, without seeing her."—Don Quixote. Vol. 1, p. 40.

† Star, June 27.

expressed his belief that Sir Francis Burdett would be returned ; and after that return, it would be the business of the people to watch the conduct of "Westminster's pride and England's hope ;"* and it is well if we do not feel it a duty equally binding to watch "the pride and hope" of other places beside Westminster. Another of the faction, and no less animated, (Mr. Hobhouse,) scruples not to denominate the Whigs "an impotent and arrogant party,"† and decidedly "the enemies of the people ;"‡ and intimates that they were formerly branded as *levellers*, and he thinks in some measure justly.‡ That these Whigs (a name which they at once usurp and disgrace) have long been a chopping and changing race is certain, and equally certain is it that the whole posse of our Norfolk patriotic reformers, headed by their new Whig leaders, the Gog and Ma-gog of their respective Guilds, (who either by tacit agreement, or by dint of mere impudence, are now casting the county, and will probably, as soon as the operation is well over, cram my Lord Albemarle and Mr. Coke as dead lumber behind the scenes), take especial care not to discredit the breed. A whiggism dependant upon, and headed by such supporters, is likely to turn out a pretty commodity ; and though I will not say that Mr. Coke's party, assimilating in many points with the Whigs of Westminster, is even yet so fallen as, in the language of Sir Francis Burdett, to "hug to its bosom infamy of every description,"§ to "inlist all in its service however base,"§ and to "hail with welcome the filth and scum of the town ;"§ I still really think, judging from some of its acknowledged coalitions, ||

* Star, July 4.

† Courier, March 1.

‡ Courier, Feb. 23.

§ Ibid. Feb. 22.

|| Mr. Coke, in his political capacity, has always had a hankering after bad company. "Though I am far (says the writer of an excellent letter to this gentleman, which appeared in the Nor-

that it is making rapid approaches towards this last bitter state of inanity and despair, a state in which "the very name of Whig will become a term of reproach."* It is a fatal hour that shall see this goodly county turned into a nest of republicans, and the lion couchant at the feet of the hyæna.

But the wide and dangerous difference between our party and the various knots of Whigs, Reformers, and Revolutionists, that, like the wild inhabitants of the desert, hunt their prey and afterwards growl and den together, will open more and more upon us as we advance. The points upon which we renounce all shadow of agreement with our adversaries; the parts of the British constitution which, following on the line of their French prototypes, they would forcibly tear from the body politic, and which we would

wich papers of the 31st July, 1802) from imputing to the friends with whom you have generally acted any intentions to subvert the government of their country, or any wish to see it exposed to the dangers of a revolution, yet I will venture to assert, that those friends, from some motives or other, have given their countenance to men in whom that wish and those intentions were notorious. On the support of these men, (whom in their hearts, as Englishmen, they could not but despise) they have not disdained to found their strength as a party." In the pamphlet from which I have made the above extract, (Norfolk Election and Scrutiny, 1802) Mr. Coke, in his address to the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders, observes, "My long acquaintance with the frank and manly character of the freeholders of Norfolk, abundantly convinces me, that no one class of them deserves to be mentioned in opprobrious terms. For my part, I am accustomed to honour their zeal, whether the direction it takes be favourable or unfavourable to myself." This as a declaration is noble. But how has it been fulfilled? Ask of the "Address to the independent Freeholders" from St. James's Square, May 26, 1817. This boast of honouring the zeal of his adversaries might indeed be brought pretty well home to him, were we not of opinion with Mr. Lyttleton, (Debate on Lotteries,) "that the *argumentum ad hominem* is useless, where the *homo* minds nothing that you have to say to him."

* Morning Chronicle, March 4.

sacredly preserve, I shall now beg leave, gentlemen, to bring before and to recommend to your consideration. Upon the subjects of *hereditary succession and the royal prerogative* we know pretty well, through the medium of the public prints, their very lax opinions. We advocate not any more than themselves the divine right of kings. Neither with this ancient *jure divino*,* nor even, with indefeasible, do we confound hereditary right. With the former it has no allowed connection. With the latter, if such connection be ever presumed to exist, it is dissoluble by parliament. Still that right upon which so much of our peace depends, of our dignity, of our security, external and internal, of our government and religion; that hereditary right we must ever maintain to be agreeable with the divine law and sanctioned by the divine procedure. Passive obedience and non-resistance, if they are doctrines that were ever seriously maintained, of which there is some reason to doubt, are died away. A divine right to rule must proceed from a divine commission, and we know of none.—Yet a merciful ruler may, in some sort, be said to have this divine right in himself. Where “the throne is established in righteousness,” it is as firm and as sanctified as the legislative power itself—it is indeed absolute. For none will venture to disturb an authority so tempered and so exercised, any more than they would disturb the authority of the Almighty. And he who

* Something, however, of this *jure divino* sovereignty, as it appertaineth to government, seems inherent in our very nature. The auspices that were consulted at the early periods of elective monarchies, is, I think, a proof, is at any rate a rather strong presumption of this. The will of the people was no will, unless ratified by the priests and prophets. Divination served here the purposes of a purer sanction; and if it influenced not the choice, it abated, at least, the rudeness and injustice of popular election. But this is a remark which I hazard with considerable diffidence.

should go about to resist such a government, must be weak or mad, or in the last stage of depravedness.

We have no notion of any thing like injury done us by hereditary succession. On the contrary we look upon it as a blessing, and of a most sacred cast, in as much as it delivers us from many fears and much possible contingent danger. Hereditary succession is the curb-stone of our constitution; is that which fits and frames it for the coming tempests of the state. It leaves it to work at liberty, and to renew its strength and preserve its purity amid all the defections by which it is surrounded. A hereditary successor, in short, is the palladium of our national greatness and of our national rights; and whatever we may think of its approximation to a divine origin, we must yet place it very high among the contrivances of human wisdom. The elective nature of kingdoms and governments, at an early period, is no proof that there was not consummate polity, in more advanced stages of society, in resorting to hereditary succession. By restraining the contentions for power and the temptations to violence, it was soon found that the public welfare was improved; and as the arts of bad men have increased, so has the benefits of such a fixed succession; and the more numerous and high any state becomes, the less can it afford to dispense with such succession. We see, therefore, in the history of our own country, that though usurpations occasionally occurred, they were rather submitted to than encouraged, even in the earliest periods, and, in later times, were effected with greater difficulty and borne with greater impatience.

Prior indeed to the conquest, it may be doubted whether hereditary right was so firmly established as not to have been dispensed with when any present pressure rendered it needful, or when a fairer line seemed to present fairer prospects. But these deviations were rare, and the emergency would appear in

some measure to carry its apology with it. Indeed but for the advantages to public liberty that frequently attended them, the rightful succession to the throne would not, probably, in any case have been violated with impunity; for in many instances that might be quoted, the nation would rather have foregone the benefits than been exposed to the tumults of usurpation. Hereditary right was always recognised though it could not always be enforced, nor was the throne at all considered as secure that was founded on an unlawful succession, judicious as might be the government of the reigning sovereign. The long and bloody wars that followed upon the usurpation of the house of Lancaster, and which nearly depopulated England of her ancient nobility, is too sad a demonstration, though a proud and useful one, that hereditary succession is contemplated as the only lawful succession by the inhabitants of these realms.

If at the revolution in 1688 the nation are to be considered as again taking the power into their own hands and setting aside hereditary succession, it was because immediate hereditary succession would have gone high to have overturned, with the established religion, every ecclesiastical and civil right of the subject. To preserve the greater blessing therefore they were compelled to forego the less. But they departed from the immediate line of succession as little and for as short a time as possible, rejecting merely the present sovereign, but recognizing his protestant descendants, and clearly would not have departed from it at all if they could have felt themselves secure in their liberties by adhering to it. It was not, gentlemen, as Mr. Coke assures us, at that glorious period "practically demonstrated that kings were made for the people and not the people for kings,"* a position that

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

might go near to render the succession elective; it was, on the contrary, then practically proved that the crown was strictly hereditary so long as the laws of the realm were obeyed by the monarch wearing that crown, but even therein failing, still, in its nature, strictly hereditary. Nor is "the language which we hear now-a-days respecting the privileges and rights of legitimacy" at all "different."* Once understood, this language is understood for ever, though the Whigs of the new school give us pretty strong proofs that they never have understood it; a school upon the Lancastrian plan, where all may think and teach what sort of doctrines they please, such as breathe of any very violent attachment to church or state alone excepted.

That the crown of England though hereditary may have its succession changed by the nation, and that that nation has yet, from our earliest to our latest annals, so seldom comparatively and with such manifest delicacy and caution exercised such authority, is strong presumptive evidence in favor of the benefit of an hereditary succession, and speaks more perhaps in its behalf than if it had never been disturbed. But the blessings of hereditary succession cannot be fully appreciated until a nation has been exposed to the curse of an elective succession, a succession which insures no stability, produces no confidence, and confers no comfort. Where the crown is elective it will be found that the constitution is elective too; that religion, and laws, and government, all turn round as popular opinion blows, all become what popular opinion pleases to make them. A government not hereditary would be a government for a state of society very different to the present. It would be a government of hopes and fears, of surmises and suspicions, and the mind would be kept in a constant agitation between

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

varying and discordant passions. The great would have no comfort and the lowly no security, but all would feel the inconstancy of succession as a check upon their enjoyments ; as the first care to embitter the beginning, and the last misery to close up the end of their existence.

No less striking is the difference between us and our opponents, and in which, with the history of their revolution in recollection, they will be found to follow the steps of their French prototypes, in the opinions we respectively entertain and advocate of the exercise of the *royal prerogative*. Certainly we need not feel any fear, but may rather plume ourselves on some degree of virtue in attacking such prerogatives when they exceed the limits of their lawful extension. But wantonly with our self-sufficient adversaries "to pare down prerogative as low as possible," is a madness only to be exceeded by its folly. This prerogative, essential to the well-being of our limited monarchy and to the just government of the community, is enough perhaps restrained by the laws and constitution of the realm from materially infringing upon the liberty of the subject.* The body of the British parliament will always be too strong for any corrupt limb of it. The "declaration of rights" may be considered as a fuller enforcement, a deeper recognition of magna charta ; nor can any extension of the royal prerogative reasonably be dreaded while the powerful security of such declaration remains to us. A due

* I have here a decisive authority on my side. Mr. Hobhouse, in the late election at Westminster, observed, that "the people had nothing to apprehend from the power of the crown ; the crown was in possession of little power, and that little was under the regulation of the constitution." (Courier, Feb. 23, 1819.) Paring down prerogative therefore is a mere stalking horse, even in the opinion of the very men who use it, and similar declarations, as a pretext.

exercise of the prerogative has been held by our ablest statesmen to be equally advantageous to the whole of the body politic. But if either the sovereign overstep the bounds of constitutional restraint, or the subject too largely encroach upon the royal privileges, the state must suffer from these mutual infringements. Of indeed so sacred a nature is the royal prerogative when bounded by law, that it hath been laid down as an incontrovertible principle, that, in such guarded prerogative, the king is and ought to be absolute.

But what, gentlemen, is it that these Whig mechanics, these state shavers and parers down of privilege, would wish to restrain? They would not, I think, go the length of curtailing the sovereign of any of his direct prerogatives. They would not surely touch his dignity or character; or subvert the ancient useful maxim that the king can do no wrong; or ascribe to him less than a political immortality. As the representative of his subjects, they would not, I presume, deny him the power of appointing ambassadors, or of entering into foreign leagues and alliances, or of making war and peace, or of preferring to civil and military commands and to the principal offices of the state, or of convening, proroguing, dissolving parliament and having his veto upon their resolutions, or of investing with dignities such of those subjects as he may deem deserving. Neither would they probably dispute that part of his prerogative which hath regard to the supreme government of the established church. They would not, I should think, venture to pull down any of these foundation pillars of monarchy; and as for lesser exercises which grow out of them, they are barely, I conceive, sufficient to keep that ravening republican wolf from the door, who, if he were once let in, would prowl over every apartment of royalty, and marking all for desolation, would swallow up crowns and sceptres, and

every thing in the shape of kingly government that came in his way. I am sure, if the people knew their own interest, they would stop their ears against all such seducing doctrines as tended needlessly to abridge the powers vested in the crown. For it will be found in the period of our own history, that what these Whig orators call "paring down the prerogative as low as possible," was no other than the reducing public virtue as low as possible, and that more corruption and venality, more profusion, more consequent public burden and distress have originated from impolitic encroachments upon the crown, than from any encroachments of the crown upon the subject. Indeed the subject's best defence against the tyranny of these aristocratical dictators of the Hampden school, will be found, as the tide now runs, not in paring down, but in supporting the just and wholesome prerogatives of the sovereign, and even, on emergency, extending the sovereign power. Where society is constantly in motion, and false philosophy, and infidelity, and a coarse and revolting spirit abound, "offences will come" which no ordinary acts of the legislature can guard against. Rome had occasionally her dictator, who, to restore her authority, was compelled to trample on her laws; and England may by and by find herself in a similar situation.

Curtail the royal prerogative too much, and you will presently get a democratical government entire, so considerable is the influence, and, for the most part, so popular the proceedings of a British house of commons in virtue of our free constitution. On this subject Mr. Hume has observed, (an authority which no Whig in politics, no infidel in religion, will regard with any other than a feeling of veneration) "the share of power allotted by our constitution to the house of commons is so great, that it absolutely commands all the other parts of the government. The king's legislative power is plainly no proper check to

it. For though the king has a negative in the passing of laws, yet this, in fact, is esteemed of so little moment, that whatever is voted by the two houses, is always sure to be passed into a law, and the royal assent is little better than a mere form. The principal weight of the crown lies in the executive power. But besides that the executive power in every government is altogether subordinate to the legislative; besides this, I say, the exercise of this power requires an immense expence, and the commons have assumed to themselves the sole power of disposing of public money.”* It will require the united strength probably of the other two branches to counteract so preponderating an influence; for the reason assigned in this essay by the historian will not, I think, suffice alone, in so systematized and extended an opposition as at present obtains. Nay, tis well if this union, amid such a chain of seditions as is working and netting itself night and day, such a spirit of factious revolt as is gone out and is wrapping the land in Egyptian darkness, will prove sufficient to insure our monarchical preservation. The times, I suspect, are not yet over, as certain of our Norwich *blue and white patriots* can perhaps inform us, for drinking (under the rose) “confusion to king-craft and priest-craft.” O when will these practised delusions, these dastardly denunciations, these deadly symptoms of hostility to church and state, open the eyes of those who hold such revolutionary characters

* See Hume's Essays. Essay V. of the independency of Parliament. On such a subject and with such men as we are opposed to, Mr. Belsham may also be authority worth the reciting. “The weight, says he, of democracy in the English constitution is such, as to preclude the aristocracy from the faintest hope of success, in any contest for pre-eminence which might succeed the eventual reduction, or annihilation of the regal power.”

History of Great Britain. Vol. 6.—159.

in reverence? When will Mr. Coke's *independent clergy of the diocese of Norwich* learn properly to appreciate the company they have got among; men who flatter, and laugh at, and despise, and detest them in the same breath; who now use them for their interest, (the only accompt they ever wish to turn them to) and will by and bye "use them for their sport."

Neither less, gentlemen, recollect are we at issue with our political opponents on the subject of a *Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament*; nor, so far as circumstances tally, do they here too disdain the track of the French revolutionists. This is the great broad road on which they bring up their heavy artillery. On this neuter-ground they erect their battering rams which are destined to thunder down the government of the realm. Under this covered way they at their leisure make their lodgements, plan their minings and sappings, and lay their trains for the demolition of all above and about them. Ill would it become me; ill would it become any man with respectful notions of that revolution which "stablished, strengthened, settled" the limited monarchy of these realms, to set his face against parliamentary reform, against abuses in church or state, against the liberty of the press, against the rights of the people, against any regulations or legislative improvements that have made us the envied nation we are. It is necessary to keep these prime objects in view; to ponder them in silence; to make their chastised consideration ever present with us, and conducive to the perfection of the government under which we live. No one is less willing to abridge the reasonable exercise of those rights than he who opposes such an exercise of them as is not reasonable. Now surely it is not reasonable that the well-being of society should depend upon the mere will of a heady multitude, inflamed rather than guided by weak and seditious zeal. It is not

reasonable that where wisdom has paused in her enactments, an empty sufficiency, a daring temerity should go on without pause. It is not reasonable that what shall be our religion, what our laws, what our government, what our chance for national prosperity or national security, should be left to the legislative sagacity, the strange guidance and authority of such fiery delegates as many of our ultra and Whig adversaries notoriously are.

But to such senators as these, though mighty in their seditions, poor puling creatures in their understanding, must we in good measure, I fear, consent to leave them, if the popular cry for annual parliaments and universal suffrage should be powerful enough to prevail to their adoption. Parliamentary reform is a broad term. It germinates as it proceeds, and takes in almost any thing you please of any shape or nature.* It models to its own notions every thing fortuitous, every thing flagitious. It may end in annual parliaments, or rump parliaments, or no parliaments at all, according as the revolutionizing spirit is alive, or the universal suffrage feeling gradu-

* This incessant harping upon parliamentary reform as the universal panacea, is happily ridiculed in a paper I met with the other day, and which the benevolent writer seems to have published with a view of exposing these impudent and unfeeling quack politicians. "Sir, I am almost famished. My good friend you want a reform in parliament.—I have had no work for a month past. You must get rid of the rotten boroughs.—My wife lies in of her seventh child. Annual parliaments will soon cure that.—My children are destitute of clothes and food. They are not sufficiently represented.—A little supply for present food would be—Fool! you'll only be as hungry to-morrow.—There is little chance of my poor wife recovering. All owing to the interference of peers in election.—A good lady has promised to send us some bread and coals. Old Sarum sends two members.—A very little money would relieve us. All in vain, while we have such a house of commons as the present.—The smallest donation would be acceptable. I have given my *penny* to Lord C——'s subscription."

ated at the time.* Indeed I am inclined to believe with Mr. Canning, in the somewhat suspicious ex-

* I here beg leave to allude to a speech delivered at Mr. Fox's commemoration dinner at Norwich, as I find it given in a local paper (the Mercury) of January 30th last, to the editor of which the public are much indebted for a valuable document that might otherwise have perished. After my Lord Albemarle (the chairman) and Mr. Coke had, according to custom, pretty well primed and prepared their company in honour of the day, and the former of these gentlemen had remarked, that the present Whig principles were misunderstood by the people, Mr. N. B. Palmer, of Yarmouth, heated with patriotism and puissance, "arose to say a few words," explanatory, I presume, of these misunderstood principles. "The utility (observes the orator) of meetings of this sort assembled to celebrate such a cause, is incalculable; they promote, in the first place, political discussion, and, in the next, they hold out to the great the honour of giving their assistance." Of giving their assistance to *what* we should be glad to know? Perhaps the context may inform us. "With regard to reform (continues Mr. Palmer) I go as far as many in my opinions, but others I go beyond. I say, get what we can; let us get our fingers in, and our whole hands will soon follow. Let us deluge the house with petitions. Let us pray for triennial parliaments, *and when we have got them, let us try for others.*" Was this language for my Lord Albemarle and Mr. Coke, and the respectable part of the company to have heard, to have endured, to have countenanced by hearing and enduring it? Was it language for any man to have endured who had the least regard for political character, and did not wish to be ranked as a decided revolutionist at once? Yet no disapprobation, as it appears, was manifested towards this part of the speech during its delivery; no censure passed upon it afterwards. But surely if these great supporters of the Whig interest were the friends to the constitution they so vauntingly pretend to be—if, as my Lord Albemarle observed, "the leading feature of their principles was *loyalty*," how could they put up with such insinuations from such a man—how could they suffer themselves to be insulted, and the county in them, by this open expression of a feeling which ought instantly to have been met and annihilated by one general burst of indignation? Who will give them credit for their attachment to church or state, for their desire "to preserve the royal prerogative and the just rights of the people," while they can thus countenance such barefaced allusions to a species of reform which must lead to the demolition of both? If Mr. Coke and my Lord Albemarle wish to continue these commemorations of Mr. Fox's

pression of that gentleman's sentiments by Sir Francis Burdett, that if, under such legislative guardians, "the house of commons were *reformed*, the king and the peers would be speedily deposed."* Our representation is certainly inadequate, but I know not that it is therefore injurious, nor am I altogether persuaded that it is unjust. Many able men have considered the present representative system to be as efficacious, for all purposes of national convenience and comfort, as a more extended franchise, and the cause of public liberty to be as well served by septennial, as it probably would be by annual parliaments. Upon this subject different opinions will be entertained by those who love to go into refined speculations, and as society, with all her garniture, veers about, may be entertained at different times even by the same persons. We are constantly compelled to modify the institutions of antiquity, wisely and virtuously as they were cast in their first mouldings.—An original merit may be a present defect; may, at least, border upon defect. We shall not, I hope, dis-

birth-day, and to have them constitutionally and respectably attended, and considered as touchstones of that "glorious Whig spirit" which they profess to "hail with joy," they will, for the future, be very careful how they suffer such interlopers among men of their pure principles, as this Mr. N. B. Palmer; albeit report holdeth him forth as a sort of confidential counsellor of the Holkham and Quiddenham cabinets, and, like the celebrated Earl of Warwick, the York and Lancaster King Maker, in his government of Great Yarmouth supreme. I request of the freeholders of the county to notice two circumstances—first, that such a speech was actually delivered in and before such a company *nem. con.* and secondly, that the person so delivering it is in the confidence (and I believe I may add, very highly) of Mr. Coke, Mr. Anson, and other the principal supporters of the Norfolk Whig party. What sort of a party that is, after such a sample of its affiliated defenders, there needs no crossing of the conjurer's palm to determine.

* Star, July 14.

cover by experience what annual parliaments and universal suffrage, in their results, would lead to. But situated as we are, with all the old virtues of society disappearing about us, and innovation teeming on every side and renovation on none, we should not I think, gentlemen, be among the number of those who would feel it a duty to recommend such an experiment. When we see what periodical confusions even septennial parliaments with a limited suffrage bring forth, we can be at little loss to determine how a larger suffrage would operate. The witty argument for going back to triennial parliaments, that "our representatives might thus be allowed to sin two years and repent one,"* is nugatory; for I am terribly afraid that such hardened offenders as Mr. Coke of Norfolk, whether the duration were fixed to three or to seven years, would go on sinning to the end of the chapter, and, even in the last struggles of political dissolution, manifest no sign of repentance.

It is a pity that any gentlemen who mean well, and who are only anxious for the public weal, should advocate such a measure under such circumstances; should, with the popular manners all inflamed to madness, advocate it under any modification as to time, or any limitation as to property whatever.† It is the

* Norfolk Chronicle, June 27, 1818.

† Mr. Coke, in a late debate on the Excise Duties Bill, expressed his belief, that "Reform in parliament was the only true remedy for most of the present grievances;" and declared, as the papers purport, that "he would go the full length of asserting that this (the present house of commons I presume) was a corrupt house, from which no good could be expected." (Evening Mail, June 18.) Mr. Canning, on the contrary, in rising to move the order of the day upon Sir Francis Burdett's motion for parliamentary reform, June 2, 1818, has ventured very justly, I think, to object even to moderate reform, "because it would lead, by degrees, to the very object which was now proposed to the house. Every intermediate step obtained would be used as a stepping-stone to attain that end." (Star, June 3, 1818.) What he

interest indeed of the people which is the great stalking horse of reform with those who would willingly emerge from obscurity and crime through the medium of that revolution to which, they trust, such reform would eventually lead. But as to the people themselves, I see not how they could be gainers by any mode of reform. They have never felt any ill effects from septennial, they would never probably experience any good effects from annual parliaments.— Without a vote they have never been forgotten in the decisions of the legislature; with a vote they would not be better remembered. Whatever may be the mode of election, the elected must consult the common welfare; must make that welfare the first and last, the great and constant object of their concern. If they and the other branches of parliament did not, the king would cease to reign and the constitution would cease to be; for no government, (I care not of what description) forgetting the inte-

afterwards subjoins upon this subject is too seriously valuable to omit. “It was said that the house did not sufficiently represent the people. If the house represented the people as it was understood, and the will of the people was the rule of government, then king and lords would be nuisances and excrescences. Let the house look at the last year of the reign of Charles the First, and it would find, in its own journals, resolutions taken by the long parliament, and containing a very correct exposition of the Hon. Baronet’s theory. They would read that it was resolved—first, that the people, under God, were the original of all just government. 2dly. That the commons of England, in parliament assembled, chosen by and representing the people, had the supreme power in these kingdoms. And 3dly, ‘That what had been enacted or declared for law, by the commons of England in parliament assembled, had the force of law, and the people were bound by it, although the consent of the king and the lords had not been had thereto.’—These resolutions had been followed by a vote, declaring the house of lords no longer useful; and soon after by another, dethroning the king and taking away his life. Yet could it be denied that the theory of the Hon. Baronet was contained in these resolutions.”

rests of the vast mass of the people, so far as those interests can and ought to be consulted and secured, would last, or would deserve to last, throughout the fleeting change of a moon. Annual parliaments therefore and universal suffrage can be insisted upon by no description of men who profess to admire the principles of our constitution, against which, I conceive, a change of this nature in our representation would materially militate. Abstract reasoning upon such a point would be little less than lunacy, with all experience against us that man is not fitted for the exercise of such a right, nor for receiving benefit from such a representation. The will of the people it would be difficult to determine; the fleeting-changeable temper of the people it would be impossible to please; the judgment of the people, where it could be gathered, could but seldom perhaps be approved. To adventure upon such a step would be all hazard and folly. Before we could calculate upon any benefits, we must have a world differently created, and creatures to inhabit it of a far humbler and holier nature.

But the Whigs are not advocates for annual parliaments. True—as a body I believe they are not; as a body of their original complexion. But the Whigs of the present day, the congregating assimilating Whigs, with their net cast into a tempestuous sea and gathering of every kind, are, I am sorry to say, not averse to annual parliaments, or to any and every mode of suffrage that will promote their views and humble their enemies. These Whigs have no objection to see their own doctrines (sufficiently obnoxious, if we may judge from our Norwich and Norfolk specimens) spun out into greater length and blown up into a more energetic spirit by the “radical reformers,” and these reformers again are happy to find their motions seconded by the whole host of ultras. The present enlarged edition of Whiggism,

hot-pressed, and new bound and gilt and lettered, comes forth with a Hampden commentary on a pretty broad scale; on a scale so broad that we are at a loss to determine whether the regicides of the Protectorate, or the French revolutionists, yet green in their graves, are still speaking through our English demagogues, or whether those demagogues, all foul with sedition, are drawing from the stores of their own sacrilegious minds. The coarse anomalous harangues which we hear every day we scarcely know how to class. The Whigs are for triennial parliaments, the reformers for annual, the revolutionists, accounting all alike inefficient and nefarious, for none. But both Whigs and Revolutionists agree in using the harshest language and entertaining the hardest opinions of the measures of government, and in scattering among a people, made unquiet by their misrepresentations, the boldest incentives to disobedience and disaffection. In these important and melancholy results of their respective conduct, who are Whigs or who are Revolutionists, it is hardly worth while to enquire. Whether Whigs or Revolutionists, their unhappy country is, alas! almost equally "without either part or lot" in them.

I am not of their mind who believe that the conduct manifested towards Mr. Demagogue Hunt and others of the like cast at the late Westminster elections, proves the general dislike, among the reforming class of our population, to universal suffrage and annual parliaments. It is such men as these who rather bring a lucky discredit on a bad cause. They have not always uppermost, as finished Machiavelians ought to have, the requisite concealments and precautions. In the revolutionary enthusiasm of their souls, they are apt to lose sight of the skilful preparation of the public mind for public confusion. They are for striking too soon, and thus too soon put us on our guard by evincing what spirit they are

of. Shew to the people of England a picture of revolution in all its horrors, and they will flee the monster, or drive him into the depths of the nethermost hell. But gently, gradually, plausibly entice them on by Whig principles, no matter where they are borrowed from; Whig speeches, no matter by whom or for what purpose delivered; doctrines of general reform, doctrines of "radical reform;" a soothing amalgamation of all religious opinions; a holy union of all religious denominations; a church of England missionary society springing from the bowels of the rankest sectarism; a church of England evangelical clergy hugging the altar (for its gifts) with one hand and the tabernacle with the other; preach up to them in assuasive accents that religious toleration is a right withheld, civil incapacities a wrong inflicted, and a liberal spirit, in all matters appertaining to church and state, the spirit which Christianity enjoins, and which the improved state of society and that policy which ought ever to wait upon it requires—let this be the mode of approach and the business is nearly as good as done. The traveller threw off his cloak to the sun, though the rude wind only made him wrap it the closer about him. By a boisterous threatening attitude they would have failed; by dexterously throwing a tub to the whale they succeed.

Another strange and very suspicious doctrine broached by those, taking them as a body, to whom we are opposed, and in which, gentlemen, I am sure, as free and independent electors, we never shall agree with them, is, that a representative is bound to adopt the opinions, and, on all occasions, implicitly to obey the will of his constituents. This is, I think, evident from the Westminster proceedings, as well as from certain of the speeches delivered during the last day of the city of London election. Thus Mr. Cleary tells us, "it would be an abandonment of the princi-

ples which they professed, and for the last ten years steadily acted upon, to return as their representative any but a radical reformer, determined, like Sir Francis Burdett, to fight the people's cause, on the ground of universal freedom. It may be true, that Sir Samuel Romilly, from the nature of his situation, in being returned for a borough, was heretofore shackled. To be therefore the second member might have the effect of unshackling him on the question of reform."* Alderman Wood comes forward and "calls upon the livery to mark every vote he gave, and that would enable them to decide whether he was influenced by public principle or not."* (Loud applause.) Mr. Waithman declares "he should conform to the opinions of his constituents, and when they found him unworthy of his seat in parliament, he knew they would do their duty towards him, as they had done it towards those who had been just stripped of their dignities."* Mr. Wilson, more reasonable, more anxious for his dignity and independence than for his popular credit or interest, assures us—and I copy, gentlemen freeholders of Norfolk, so chastised and excellent a declaration with pleasure—that "his duty was of the most serious description. It was not only to represent the civil and commercial interests of his constituents, but to support the constitution in church and state, and do the best he could at all times to serve his fellow-citizens, whose opinions he should, upon all occasions, take the opportunity of consulting. It would, he declared, afford infinite pleasure to him, that there should at all times exist a coincidence of opinion between him and those who sent him to parliament; but as he was a man independent of ministers, wanting nothing from them, and capable of no servility to their will, he trusted the livery would allow him to use a discretion upon questions that

* Star, June 24.

might arise, and that credit would be given to him for good intention, should his view be opposite to their opinion and to the public feeling.”* (Much disapprobation, mingled with applause.) Here we discover pretty plainly the pulse of the popular mind. These are your “free and independent members”—these are your “guardians of the rights and liberties of the people”—these are your “opposers of a slavish and corrupt administration.” Mr. Alderman Wood might well tell us, that “a most wonderful change had taken place in the opinions of the people ;”* for without such a change, as melancholy to the full as astonishing, such a batch of city senators would never have been returned to shame a British house of commons. Their triumph, “the triumph of truth, of justice, and of freedom?”* The triumph over them rather than of them ; and very gratefully as well as very prudently does Mr. Waithman add, “this was a lesson to representatives, by which he hoped the world would benefit. It would caution them against treating the people with indignity.”*

It is idle, I wish it were not worse, to contend that a representative is at all times at the will of his constituents, and that he must act and vote as they would have him. A house of commons, obedient to the will of a dissolute people, would be a pest-house, would be constantly casting forth its tribunitial powers to torment and destroy the state. A house of commons bearing no stamp of its popular origin and object, connecting itself with none of our popular feelings, attending to none of our popular complaints, would destroy at once the nature of that mixed government so justly our boast, and plunge us into uncontrolled and aristocratical despotism. But to say that between these extremes (almost equally to be

* Star, June 24.

deprecatèd) there is no medium, and that if the commons house of parliament be not at the beck of the people we must sink into a corrupt dependence upon the crown, is to contradict all reason and past experience, and all that we are in the habit of daily observing at present. The fact will, I think, be found to be, that when the people have sent their representatives to parliament they have done with them, have done with the exercise of all authority over them. Their own reason and judgment, their own fixed principles, and a deep sense of the important powers with which they are invested, must, from that moment, constitute their sole guide. On all great state questions of policy they must exercise their unfettered opinions, without either knowing or concerning themselves with the opinions of those who elected them, and without considering who among them they may please or displease by their decisions. On any other grounds they would be mere puppets in leading strings. The people make a house of commons, and the house of commons, in return, (conjointly with the other branches of parliament) make those laws which bind their creators, and by which their creators have consented to be bound. For whatever may be the stage or state of society, whatever the mode of government, the popular cast of mind, the *Jura summi Imperii* must be found settled and fixed somewhere. And as this power can never be got rid of, but, like the principle of vegetation, pervades all time and space, and depressed in one spot springs up ranker in another, so, in our own case, has the nation prudently determined to invest it with those of whose constitutional principles they are previously persuaded, and of whom they have formed the best opinion for wisdom and for rectitude.

This doctrine of cashiering their representatives, if they presume to have a will of their own, may tally very well with the dissenting pandect of revolu-

tion as promulgated by their arch apostle, Dr. Price, but is utterly subversive of that spirit of freedom which our constitution inculcates, and which, conceding to every part of society, it certainly can never mean to withhold from so essential a part of it as the representatives of the people of England. What was the conduct of Mr. Burke when, in his detection of the causes which produced our national discontents in the time of that unprincipled demagogue Wilkes, he proposed his remedy for such discontents? Did he, with the Whig multifarious faction of the present day, go to paring down prerogative to the last rind? Was he for plucking up rational liberty, and sober religion, and all the happily set orders of society with them, by the roots? Did he colleague with, and bring in jacobin doctrines as a succedaneum for popular commotion and a preservative from anti-jacobin oligarchy? Had he recourse to the Hunts and the Woolers of that period as a counter-check to the Castlereaghs and the Cannings, or raked he the kennels of democracy in every town and county of the kingdom for pacifying the murmurs of the people by hooting and yelling down their governors in church and state? He chalked out that fair and noble line on which popular representation, in a high and palmy empire like ours, ought ever to run. He recommended that England should send to her common's house of parliament men independent in their principles, aristocratical in their rank, and interested in the pure government and welfare of the nation by their property and possessions. These were his valuable class of middle men, equally unfettered by the chains of ministry on the one hand, and by the more galling manacles that bind up both soul and body of a rude licentious people on the other.

Thus it was that this great man thought, and thus too was it that whenever the occasion called upon him he acted. On this ground—the only one on

which any representative should consent to be a representative—did he advocate the cause of the Roman Catholics in voting for the repeal of certain pains and penalties, though entirely contrary to the wishes of his constituents. But his heart was with the subject ; and where his heart was, he very properly determined that his voice and vote should be. His constituents, had they duly appreciated the value of a conduct so conscientious, should have been the last persons to have censured it. It was an earnest how mighty and prevalent would be such a spirit when it could act with the same noble regard to its integrity, in consonance with their wishes. The mind of such a man was not to be fettered, and he might well think scorn of surrendering the exercise of his sound judgment, his deep experience, his full, lofty, dignified persuasions to the wishes of his Bristol constituents, or indeed of any constituents. He did right. He did right in the opinion of even his most determined adversaries. We do not—said an able minister of that day, far more unfortunate than censurable in his measures—“ we do not stand here as the deputies, but the representatives of the people. We are not to refer to them before we determine. We stand here as they would stand ; to use our own discretion without seeking any other guidance under heaven.”* Noble language this, gentlemen, which will find its way into the heart of every honest and honourable elector ; which will more serve the cause of the individual by serving the cause of the community ; which tends to engender manly feelings, and right notions, and proper expectations in all parties ; and which leaving the mind in possession of its native independence, leaves it to the exercise of its maturest judgment, and to the promulgation and

* Lord North's speech in debate on Parliamentary Reform, May 7, 1783.

establishment of its clearest, soundest, most constitutional principles.

But on no subject, gentlemen, do we more disagree with our opponents than on that dreadful one which goes under the imposing name of the *Majesty of the people*; a subject which I shall consider somewhat more at large, both because it is the spur of democratic eloquence, and because, in its direction and application, it is of most dangerous tendency. This doctrine is advocated, I believe, directly or indirectly, by the greater part of them. And here it will be found that the example of revolutionary France is no warning, but rather a "pillar of fire" to those who seem desirous of treading the same dark road. This delusion of the Majesty of the people they only, in times so distorted as the present, can bring themselves to adopt who have either minds incapable of discerning between good and evil, or who conceal other designs than they think proper to avow. We know what the people soberly speaking are; what they are and were intended to be in every nation as well as in our own. They are every where, going back to the aboriginal state of society, the source of power. All authority springs from, is invested in, rests with them. But this authority they surrender for their own good, for their own preservation. For that good and preservation they consent to be bound by good and wholesome laws, and while they act in conformity with those laws, which derive their influence from their accordance with revelation and reason, they may be considered as little less than supreme in their will and invincible in their strength. To the Majesty of the people so nurtured and growing up in virtue and stature, monarchy, and aristocracy, and all the various gradations of social life, mixt and moulded into one body, are prepared to bow, and the voice of the people thus consecrated by a willing, dignified obedience to the laws of the state.

and to those who, in virtue of such laws, "have the rule over them," we may perhaps consider as, in some measure, assimilated with, and, beneficently awful, partaking of the voice of God.

But conceding thus far, here I conceive every prudent man ought to stop; here, truth and conscience forbidding any farther agreement, he ought to shake hands with the wild opposers of government, and on this point bid them a long and lasting farewell. We can never allow our unprincipled demagogues to go out, like scavengers, into "the lanes and streets of the city" and pick up the lowest and vilest of our population, and, after poisoning their minds against religion and government and all the authorities of the state, to represent *them* as the people, and their rash ungovernable movements as the will of the people, and their seditious spirits rising up against every form of an established monarchy and an established church, as the Majesty of the people. We can never consent that every thing done against the judgment of such men and their seducers by the executive government, should be held out as done against the will and contrary to the interests of the people. We too well recollect the use which the French regicides invariably made of this line of argument, who affected to consider our declaration of war against them (with those from other quarters) as the declaration of the government not of the people of England, of the creatures of the court, the placemen and pensioners of corruption, not of the honest and independent mass of the country. No—it is because we respect the people that we abominate these worthless representatives of them. It is because we love the people that we nauseate these wretched dregs of our population. It is because we would see the people obedient, and loyal, and happy, and happy in consequence of their obedience, that we deprecate the disaffected proceedings of these mob usurpers.

upon their rights, and that we would give up at once to the execration they deserve those who, under fair pretences, are daily corrupting the common mind for the purposes of plundering the common wealth; men who, worthless for the most part and for the most part needy, are seeking a goodlier inheritance and a softer bed where they may indulge, and riot and enrich themselves. It is, in short, because we look up to the people as the genuine guardians of our constitution in church and state, as our pride in national prosperity and our protection in national adversity, that we from our hearts abhor and detest all who would seduce them from the paths of duty, persuaded as we are that, contemplating them as the vast body of the British empire, they are a satisfied, a comfortable, a grateful body; are satisfied that the government of the realm has been gloriously exercised at a period when nothing was before us but glory or death; are comfortable when they calmly compare what is their situation, with what, under results less favourable, it might have been; are grateful when they read the calamities of other nations and look to the continued tranquillity of their own; when they see, which I am sure they do with an awful joy, their houses and lands, their flocks and herds, their wives and children about them, untouched, untainted, unviolated, and in every respect as God and nature left them.

We beg, therefore, that when our adversaries talk idly and insolently of the British constitution, or the British government, or affairs in church or state, they would have the goodness to speak in their own name only and not in that of the people of England. Where

— Men may construe things, after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves,*

* Shakespear.

some guide becomes necessary to conduct us through the maze of imposing error. The Sybil's bough must preserve us innoxious amid those dreary regions where deformity is painted in the colours of heaven, and all virtue maliciously cast into shade. The popular ear has been strangely gained and the popular mind abused by a set of half atheistical, half dissenting, and almost entirely disaffected spirits, who, under the mask of philosophy and free-thinking, stalk about the kingdom, and wherever they go open a mart for the sale of their commodities, and puff themselves off for the only statesmen and literati that England has to boast of. But let no one think that these are really the leaders of the public taste, the organs of the public voice, the constitutional pillars that support the weight of a precarious and tottering empire. No—they are the mere excrescencies of a great and powerful nation, the reptiles that trail their slime over the polished orders of society, and defame and disfigure every beautiful proportion in the works of God and man. What such men say and do, they say and do for themselves alone. They must not open the encyclopædia of their pernicious arts and sciences, and declare them to be the guides and lights of the people of England. The people of England scorn to plead guilty to so foul a reproach upon their national honour. They will not suffer such a misrepresentation of their feelings, such a distortion of their views. They hold no such doctrines as are affected to be imputed to them. The people of England know nothing, and desire to know nothing, of such addresses to the throne as our Whig adversaries would fain prepare for them. They acknowledge no participation in feelings that seem more alive to remonstrance than to reason, to licentiousness than to loyalty. They cannot mould their honest natures to the liberal politics of the times, nor adopt a boasted benevolence, a deadly deification of principles which

their soul shudders at, when they recollect to what nefarious purposes it hath served in other countries, and may, in all likelihood, be intended by and bye to serve in this. They can only contemplate it as a sample of that morbid anatomy of the human mind which the present revolutionizing age, saturated with liberty and false philosophy, has produced.

Our constitution gives no countenance to this doctrine of the Majesty of the people in its naked dress, though many are found desirous of tracing it back to such an origin. It gave none to it before the revolution of 1688, none at that period, none since. The Whig representative for Norfolk indeed assures us, "that kings were made for the people and not the people for kings;" and Mr. Coke's Whig friend and adviser confirms this declaration by insulting the public feeling with the toast of "the sovereignty of the people," and by afterwards explaining to them how the people are the sovereigns.* But though this demonstration from our Norwich delegate comes with sufficient plausibility and a tolerable share of assurance, it does not entirely settle the point. An additional authority is therefore adduced from a higher quarter "to satisfy the curiosity" of an anonymous correspondent, and to "enable him to attach a *precise idea*"† to this celebrated sentiment. Now according to Mr. Hall, (Apology for the Freedom of the Press) "the doctrine of Locke and his followers is founded on the natural equality of mankind,"† from whence it is argued, that "as the natural equality of one generation is the same with that of another, the people have always the same right to new model their government and set aside their rulers."† This

* See Mr. Edward Taylor's letter in the Norwich Mercury of February 20, 1819.

† See a letter signed C. R. in the Norwich Mercury of February 27th.

is plain speaking, and I wonder not that with such a latitude from so justly admired a writer, Mr. Edward Taylor should adventure upon such a toast. However we shall yet call this sovereignty into doubt at the present day, even upon their own principles. Mr. Hall goes on to assert, that the existing authorities in a state, "till they are set aside by the unequivocal voice of the people, are a law to every member of the community."* Nay, he declares that "to resist them is rebellion, and for any particular set of men to attempt their subversion by force is a heinous crime, as they represent and embody the collective majesty of the state."* On this principle we are willing to rest the matter, and on this (their own) principle I will venture to say that our Whig orators, our Norwich democrats, our radical reformers and anarchists, must stand self condemned, inasmuch as what they are pleased to term "the people," and the "unequivocal voice of the people," and the "authority," and the "will," and the "sovereignty of the people," is notoriously the voice, the will, the power, and the Majesty of the very refuse and dregs of our population. We consent to yield up reason, justice, virtue, every thing to their claims, if, looking to what they call the people in every quarter of the kingdom, the word can, with any equity and fair acceptance, take any other meaning than that here attached to it.

Mr. Hall concludes, "with the enemies of freedom it is a usual artifice to represent the *sovereignty of the people* as a licence to anarchy and disorder." Truly without artifice, and without any thing inimical to freedom, we may say, that with such a latitude of interpretation, such a licence to deception, such a bold, shameless, prostituted definition of the people as at present takes place, with few exceptions, among

* See a letter signed C. R. in the Norwich Mercury of February 27th.

the opponents of government, the sovereignty of the people is but another expression for the signal of revolution ; the sovereignty of the people is, in plain language, neither more nor less than the deposition of our established constitution in church and state, whenever such people take it into their heads to fancy, or their demagogue leaders can succeed in seducing them to believe such deposition necessary. Yes, there is indeed "a precise idea attached to the sovereignty of the people !" and woe be to the house of Hanover, if, upon the right of *such people* to "cashier their governors for misconduct," as these Whig members and dissenting politicians would palm upon us for the decayed, battered, graceless representatives of that truly venerable body, "rests the claim of the present family to the crown"* of the united kingdoms. "It is possible (says this republican toastmaster in the paroxysms of his patriotism) that I may live to see the principles of Locke, and Sydney, and Hoadly, and Fox become unfashionable."* It is so—but I think it is much more possible that he and his radical reformers, with such spirits as they are daily gathering round them, may live to see those principles perverted by a practice as opposite to their original design as light to darkness—it is much more possible that they may, by their deleterious mixtures, so poison these speculative founts, that whoever hereafter draws from them shall feel a rottenness in his bones and the democratical gangrene spreading and seizing upon his soul—it is much more possible that the harangues of a Whig county member, a Norwich delegate, a Yarmouth patriot, a Westminster demagogue, may breathe such a contagion on the writings of these eminent men as actually to cause them to stink in the nostrils of posterity. If such advocates for popular sove-

* See Mr. Edward Taylor's aforesaid letter.

reignty cannot demonstratively prove that what they here, and upon all occasions, term the people, is, not any local and distorted and maddened part of them, but *bona fide the great and awful mass of every rank and degree of the people of the British empire*, stand they not convicted on their own principles, and by their own evidence and confession of as high a degree of disaffection to their king and country, as, short of actual treason, can well settle itself upon an English soul?

Of this doctrine, at once plausible and pernicious, no man can think highly who thinks monarchy of any description worth the preserving. It is a doctrine which every man of sense would avoid promulgating, and which every landed proprietor should tremble to countenance in times so perturbed; and under notions and feelings so perverted as the present. Do not let us, gentlemen, be misled by these mischievous declarations. Sacredly let us perform our duty by the people; earnestly let us watch over their interest; daily and nightly let us contrive to increase their comfort and their respectability in the scale of society; but never, never let us be induced by cruel and absurd sacrifices to inflate them beyond the sphere of their original destination. The disturbers of the public peace, those assassins of every virtue, public and private, tell their sovereign that the people (that is, the people sucking in sedition from their tutoring) are the security of the throne; that to their will he owes his crown, and that when they breathe their displeasure, thrones and crowns and sceptres are like dust in the balance. The revolutionists of France preached up the very same doctrine; an easy and lenient Prince believed them, and the torrent soon rolled in blood over his devoted head. The people are indeed the security of every throne; but it is the people uncontaminated by such revolting doctrines as these. It is the people loyal, obedient, contented,

happy. It is the people in the cradle of their innocence, reposing their wills and affections on the wisdom of their rulers, and not stretched out in their coffins, dark, black with crime, with features settled and stiffened into guilt, and with the threat of pollution still curling and flickering upon their lips. Such a people are at once our pest and terror; fierce and fiery even in death, and carrying in their very countenance living the gigantic iniquities that lie brooding in their hearts. The people are, and we trust will continue, the sheet anchor of the state; but it is not the writings of such men as Cobbett and Wooler, or the philippics of such senators as Burdett and Brougham, or the Whig dinner speeches of my Lord Albemarle and Mr. Coke, or the mouthing anniversary exercises, the noisy troublesome disaffections of the little trumpery tonguesters, the scamps and pads of democracy that, (half invited, half forbidden) appear in their train, and mess at their table, which will either make or preserve them so. For the people of England to remain the pride of England, it is such preparatory instructors in national anarchy that we must teach them to hold in their contempt. In virtue of such a sovereignty of the people as these gentry are for setting up, the crown of the realm would not be worth half a dozen years purchase; and even under the shelter of the mildest explanation of this celebrated term, I know not that there would be much difference between George III. of England and Louis XVIII. of France.—Now Louis the XVIII. was an usurper.

The people, gentlemen, are in a good measure what their superiors please to make them, the statuary that must hew them out of their block of marble. They are the children of imitation,* and will go

* Of this disposition of the human mind to imitation, Plutarch, in his life of Cæsar, gives us, not indeed an uncommon, but a very

down to their graves with such marks of praise or infamy as we chuse to impress upon them. There is indeed occasionally a coarse and bitter scorn about them, sufficiently grating and sufficiently derogatory. But it is a signature of our common uncultivated nature, and we must be neither too harsh against it, nor too sensibly affected with it. In the early periods of the Roman republic, the tone of popular feeling was set high. What their great and illustrious leaders were, they were. Their temperance, their justice, their magnanimity, their patriotism and glory, were all copied into and silently commixed with the popular character. In the Imperial state this high tone of virtue was exchanged for a base and venal spirit of flattery. Greatness was paid court to. Illustrious villainy was as certain of such adulation as the people had to bestow as illustrious virtue.—Wherever the tyrant was, there were they with their prostitutions; there, with the patrician degeneracy graven on their souls, did they bow to Cæsar ruling with equity and to Cæsar wallowing in debauchery. The idols they deified one moment they demonized the next, and that general, whom their voices clothed with the sovereign purple to day, their vengeance doomed to the rags of Belisarius to-morrow. We blame them not. The monsters we have begotten we must endure. But let us remember, or we shall be wanting in justice, that, in a majority of cases, the virtue of the people is their own, while their crimes must be shared with those from whom they receive their counsels.

strong and convincing proof. “Such moreover (says he) was the affection of his soldiers and their attachment to his person, that they who, under other commanders, were nothing above the common rate of men, became invincible where Cæsar’s glory was concerned, and met the most dreadful dangers with a courage that nothing could resist.”

Considered as one great collective body, they must of necessity be the prime objects of legislation, and their happiness the rule and crown of legislation. As all our comforts flow from, so all our gratitude is due to them. In their righteous obedience we live, we move, we have our very political being. All we can do for the people, for their well being in this world, for the furtherance of their hopes and expectations in the next, will evermore fall short of what we ought, of what we desire to do for them. We care nothing indeed about their Majesty, but much about their morals and comfort; and knowing that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," we bend our endeavours to eradicate that sin, and, by every practicable means in our power, to enforce that righteousness. This is what private benevolence hath long been attempting in their favour; what the legislature of the empire hath sanctified by its countenance, and what we hope the Almighty in his mercy will ultimately vouchsafe a blessing to. But all this, as our ungenerous adversaries and theirs well know, can only be effected by such means as are at compleat contradiction with their deceptious levelling notions; all this can only be accomplished by every artful machination of theirs being first defeated.

For despotism indeed we are no advocates; for despotism either in mind, or power, or mere outward goods. It is hardly born with in any stage or state of society. We feel fully, decidedly, that, in a world like the present, we cannot be equal. But we feel as fully (it is a sentiment which I have long entertained and which I hope I shall never relinquish) that it is not agreeable to our nature, nor to the designs of Providence, nor even to the wisdom of man's legislation, that, under any form of government, in all the important concerns of "mind, body, and estate," we should be wretchedly and pitiable

unequal. Early states resisted this evulsion of all common consanguinity, this radical extirpation of the brotherhood of flesh and blood. "God created man in his own image," and who would wish or dare entirely to efface it? Greece, to avoid despotism and those reductions of soul it draws after it, suffered not her kings to go beyond such limits of rule as were deemed needful; and as for Rome, so alive was she to every gross violation of the laws and feelings of natural affection, that to stave off such a calamity she dissolved her own mighty strength, and buried Plebeians and Patricians, Kings, Consuls, and Emperors, in one common grave.

But as to liberty and equality in their wild and naked state, and as they are now advocated among us, we discard their very idea. They are words of horrible import not fit for an English ear, and should be cast into the furnace of the French revolution with all the dreadful forms of destruction to which they gave rise. The doctrine is a perfect solecism in the world of morals and of mind, and totally incompatible with such a state of probation as creatures constituted like ourselves require. It is a disorganizing doctrine, opposed to reason, to nature, to the course of every thing we see around us, and to the designs of Providence. That "the poor shall never cease from out the land," we look upon as a wise and merciful provision; as a provision against want, against overflowing crime, against rank indulgence; against the hardening of natural affection; a provision that gives us our best feelings upon earth, and furnishes us with our surest passport for heaven. The approach of the levelling system upon the confines of civilized and well ordered society is the arrival of Satan at the gate of Paradise, and we shall do well to keep a sharp eye upon the insinuating demon. For let that doctrine once come to mix itself with our notions of common equity, which the prevailing temper of the times gives

room to apprehend it may, and we must soon look for ranker thoughts and bolder doings, men being ever apter to suffer vain desires to inflame into disaffection when they are taught to believe, that as "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth," so government ought to reduce all ranks to one common scale, and to shower down the riches, titles, honours, and overflowings of the state equally upon all.*

These wild and airy dreams fasten upon man and wrap the soul for a time in elysium. But it is necessary that the mind be roused out of this cruel trance before it awake to disappointment and misery. The only equality we can admit of in this sublunary scene, where bad ambitions are with such difficulty kept in check, (and it is no small one) is that which courtesy confers in a state of polished society, where wealth cannot so entrench herself in the multitude of her possessions as to form her isolated circle and forbid learning or virtue to enter it. The pride of power will, in such a case, be met by the pride of mind, and, in the scale of sober opinion, not unfrequently be even outweighed by it. This courtesy hath ever obtained and ever must. It is the nurse of generous feeling, the cement of every thing excellent and elegant. It draws merit from obscurity, soothes the useful vanities and encourages the retiring diffidence

* Hardly any thing is ill-intentioned perhaps in its origin, nor those thoughts evil which engender whatever hath the public good solely as its object. Even the levelling system, in Cromwell's age, seems to have been devised with certain intendments of righteousness. It went upon the broad foundation, not wanting in plausibleness, that all men were born equal, and with equal powers and aptitudes to serve God in church and state, and that therefore no man should be cast off from that opportunity by any obscurity of condition, any peculiarity of opinion, civil or religious; and that justice would not fairly be dispensed between man and man which did not take this into account, and act upon it.

of our nature. A holy spell it is that links together kindred souls and inclinations in every discordant walk of life, modelling society to a softer figure, a higher bearing, a larger and more liberal emulation, and, finally, crowning the charmed work, by ranging under one and the same banner the wise, the great and the good, the mighty upon earth with that high intelligence which God hath imparted to favoured minds in every age and nation. Without such courtesy, which pride is sometimes perhaps half tempted to dispense with, but which virtue never will and policy never dare, all would be the confusion of conflicting passions, the deadly hostility of preponderating powers between each other. But this drapery, light and beautiful, and which costs us nothing, covers up all the jealousies, and envyings, and heart-burnings among the children of men, and reduces the anomaly of our common nature to something like a level with our common happiness. With this exception, we allow of no equality to be imposed upon us but by the hand of death. When man "returns to his dust and all his earthly thoughts perish," then, and not before, do we acknowledge the necessary, the dignified, the merciful distinctions of rank to perish too.

Let the people in time look to the scope and tendency of such deceptive notions, and let them not believe that the men who preach up to them these fascinating doctrines of their omnipotence, their sovereignty, their liberty and equality, are the men who either wish them well, or who would further, in the slightest degree, their promotion in the scale of society. Our Whigs and Reformers are playing a very dangerous game, and suffering the Revolutionists to stand by and hold stakes. They are making the people every thing which the people ought not to be, and ought not to wish to be. They are swelling them out with high notions of their own importance, and thus giving to the state a democratical cast of

character, though they know that democratical manners have ever been insufferable, and democratical conduct detestable. The mass of the people are in the infancy of knowledge, ever the most dangerous period of mental attainment. They cannot think, nor speak, nor act for themselves, as wisdom and virtue would incline them. Let them grow up to sounder reason, to larger experience, to better consideration; let instruction rear and harden their inconsistencies into judgment, before they assume the fasces of their power, and learn to be good subjects e'er they usurp upon the rule of the state. Surely they will at length open their eyes and see what their vile seducers are about. The fact is, and they ought to know it, that the people are every thing while they join the disaffected ranks against Government, and nothing when they stand up for Government. They are the people in the former case; they are the mere rabble in the latter. Whatever may be a man's situation in life, he is uniformly treated with or denied respect, as he promotes or retards the ends these reformers have in view, and the majesty of the people goes down no longer than they can be subdued to their purposes. The moment they resist the efforts made to trepan them; the moment they evince the least appearance of a return to better thoughts and a firmer allegiance, nothing is so vile and abominable as the people. Then it is that these impudent demagogues cry up the majesty of intellect and cry down the majesty of the people, representing them, whatever honours they may have before awarded, as fit only to live upon husks and clad themselves with sacking, and to be punished for their stupidity by the loss of every comfort. The demagogue's people is, therefore, generally the scum of our population; the vast body of the people of England, truly majestic, his execration and his scorn.

Great complainers against Government are usually,

gentlemen, at heart great subverters of government, and so, when the fair occasion has offered, have they turned out. All revolutions in a state are visitings upon the people, and generally visitings of a most afflictive nature; and all, with hardly any exception, are revolutions of craft and injustice. Where hinged the denunciations of Marius, of Sylla, of Cataline, of Cæsar, against the alledged tyrannies of the Roman senate? Where but, as the event testified, in their own seditious spirit and inordinate ambition, which they were determined upon gratifying by the sacrifice of every living virtue that stood in their way. With this view, they drew the people to them, as our Whig and reforming leaders do now. They artfully darkened every prospect upon which they wished the eye of the people to rest, and inflamed every accusation against the state that they hoped their vengeance might be induced to take up. They made them believe as (participating fully in the injury, though not in the crime of such a procedure,) our Albemarles, our Cokes, and our Burdetts, with their satellites, orb within orb, glaring and shedding around a malign influence, do at present, that their rulers were forging chains for them, and oppressing them in every quarter, and meditating their distress in every measure, and sinking the nation into a state of vassalage and imbecility. They then further undrew the curtain, and shewed the magnificent contrast. They held out to them glorious prospects, and lands “flowing with milk and honey,” and seasons of ecstatic enjoyment, when persecution should cease and tyranny be cast to the ground, and, spurning under foot every injustice, and wrenching asunder every galling manacle, the people should awake from the sleep of death and appear in all their majesty. Alas! alas! the chains, the oppressions, the persecutions, the tyrannies, were all to come, and all to come from the very hands that were to set them free and make them happy! But of the pro-

mised glorious prospects, their eyes were closed long before even the shadow of them was to be seen ! A night of treason and of darkness, with one bloody proscription after another, were all the prospects they were ever indulged with. The loss of their friends, the loss of their families, the ravage of their little property amid the general wreck and desolation, were the only comforts they were ever destined to experience, the only returns for the bad assistance they had given to these bold and bad men. O let us take history as Providence hath awfully handed it down to us ; let us look upon it as the hand-writing on the wall, that told of an empire to depart like a vision of the night ; and not for ever let us be deluded by the professions of hollow-hearted men, nor for ever suffer the Cæsars and the Syllas of the human race to seduce the poor and ignorant, to poison the public principle, and to lay waste, with a boundless callous effrontery, much of the virtue and all of the happiness of those around them !

Again, to bring the matter nearer home, (and too near, circumstanced as we are, it can never be brought to us,) is the picture in vain held before our eyes of the state of England, after the republican and sectarian reformers (for they were one, one in heart and soul, and so I fear they continue,) had overthrown the established monarchy and brought their Sovereign to the block ? I will give it you in the words of an historian certainly not too warmly affected to the hierarchy, nor averse to palliate any enormities committed against it as far as he could ; and pray, gentlemen, consider every bearing of it upon the parties and politics of the present day, that are so rapidly rolling back upon us these dangerous and disgusting times. . “ The confusions which overspread England after the murder of Charles I. proceeded as well from the spirit of refinement and innovation which agitated the ruling party, as from the dissolution of all

that authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, by which the nation had ever been accustomed to be governed. Every man had framed the model of a republic, and however new it was, or fantastical, he was eager in recommending it to his fellow citizens, or even imposing it by force upon them. Every man had adjusted a system of religion, which, being derived from no traditional authority, was peculiar to himself, and being founded on supposed inspiration, not on any principles of human reason, had no means, besides cant and low rhetoric, by which it could recommend itself to others. The levellers insisted on an equal distribution of power and property, and disclaimed all dependence and subordination. The millenarians, or fifth-monarchy-men, required that government itself should be abolished, and all human powers be laid in the dust, in order to pave the way for the dominion of Christ, whose second coming they suddenly expected. The Antinomians even insisted that the obligations of morality and natural law were suspended, and that the elect, guided by an internal principle more perfect and divine, were superior to the *beggarly elements* of justice and humanity. A considerable party declaimed against tithes and hireling priesthood, and were resolved that the magistrate should not support, by power or revenue, any ecclesiastical establishment. Another party inveighed against the law and its professors, and on pretence of rendering more simple the distribution of justice, were desirous of abolishing the whole system of English jurisprudence, which seemed interwoven with monarchical government. Even those among the republicans who adopted not such extravagancies, were so intoxicated with their saintly character, that they supposed themselves possessed of peculiar privileges; and all professions, oaths, laws, and engagements, had in a great measure lost their influence over them. The bands of society were every where

loosened, and the irregular passions of men were encouraged by speculative principles, still more unsocial and irregular." *

And those reformers of every varied description, from the Whig to the Anarchist, who are now "splitting the ears of the groundlings" with freedom of sentiment, and religious toleration, and criminal reforms, and abuses of charities, and who are representing all restrictions upon the liberty of the subject, and all attempts to prosecute for seditions nearly as black as treason, as infringements of the constitution, and declaring that the suspension of the habeas corpus is uncalled for, and the usual laws sufficient for the punishment of every offence, though by some strange means or other every offence goes on increasing; do they recollect what was the conduct of their brother reformers and patriots of the protectorate, who, like themselves, had been deafening all around them with the same frantic and popular cries? Let them look to the original from whence their own pictures may hereafter chance to be copied and engraved for the good of posterity. "The parliament (for so Mr. Hume apologizes for calling them,) judged it necessary to enlarge the laws of high treason beyond those narrow bounds within which they had been confined during the monarchy. They even comprehended verbal offences, nay intentions, though they had never appeared in any overt act against the state. To affirm the present government to be an usurpation, to assert that the parliament or council of state were tyrannical or illegal, to endeavour subverting their authority, or stirring up sedition against them; these offences were declared to be high treason. The power of imprisonment, of which the petition of right had bereaved the King, it was now found necessary to restore to the council of state; and all

* Hume's History of England. 8vo. Edit. Vol. 7, p. 155.

the jails in England were filled with men whom the jealousies and fears of the ruling party had represented as dangerous. The taxes, continued by the new government, and which, being unusual, were esteemed heavy, increased the general ill-will under which it laboured. Besides the customs and excise, ninety thousand pounds a-month were levied on land for the subsistence of the army. The sequestrations and compositions of the royalists, the sale of the crown lands, and of the dean and chapter lands, though they yielded great sums, were not sufficient to support the vast expences, and, as was suspected, the great deprecations of the parliament and their creatures.”*

Be it further considered that these criers up of the Majesty of the people never evinced the least sincerity in heart towards either them, or the very parties to whom they professed to be attached. It may well go for a common proverb that there is no friendship among the wicked; nor friendship, nor faith! We cannot forget, it is not possible, it is not right we should, that the spirit of fanaticism which, in the reign of Charles I. had supported the parliament before the murder of the King, did afterwards oppose, and disturb, and actually endeavour to destroy it; that the Puritan pulpits, then vehemently in their favour, presently became thorns in their sides; that the army practised against their officers the lessons of craft, of violence, and of insubordination they had been taught; that Cromwell himself, when made protector through the influence of his major-generals, hesitated not to sacrifice them when an extension of his ambition made him desirous of a crown; and, such was the foul and faithless nature of their proceedings, that the very demagogues against royalty, delighting but in wrong and robbery, and

* Hume's History of England. 8vo. Edit. Vol. 7, p. 167.

making the public misery their private traffic, became shortly after the demagogues against the republic.

And those very wretches who, by their combined delinquencies, had overthrown church and state, and erected themselves on their ruins, see them in power actually practising all the oppressions they had so loudly declaimed against while out of power. See them dispensing with trial by jury, and erecting high courts of justice, filled by their own creatures, and putting men to death by those very court martials which they had instantly before, in the life time of Charles I. declared illegal, and had compelled the King to abolish. What a dismal record does this period present to us of depravity and hypocrisy played off, through every winding of their corrupt hearts, against depravity and hypocrisy. The Presbyterians first raised the popular odium and rebellion against church and state, and overthrew both. The independents, practising that fraud and dissimulation against them which they had manifested against their Sovereign, seduced the army on their side, and overthrew the Presbyterians; while the army, guided by the intrigues of Cromwell and other daring characters, succeeded in dethroning the independents. But where, all this time, was the Majesty of the people, the ladder by which each in turn ascended to the height of that bad eminence? The people neither were, nor was it by these regicide incendiaries intended that they should be the better, in any respect, for these revolutions upon revolutions, these retributive returnings of the "ingredients of the poisoned chalice" to each others lips: There indeed was the Monarch murdered, and the crown cast to the ground, and the sanctuary in ruins, and the government broken to pieces; and there were the insurgent leaders exalted on their republican thrones, and the sectarian sages seated on the deserted episcopal benches; but as for the poor deluded instruments of

their enormity, they were left exactly in the same low, wretched, and unpitied condition that these revolutionary miscreants found them in; and while the ring leaders of rebellion clothed themselves in purple and rioted on the spoils of their villainy, the Majesty of the people was reduced to a truss of straw and a morsel of bread!

I would intreat our gentlemen of rank and family throughout the kingdom to take heed how they encourage the notion, now every where so prevalent, of bowing the head and bending the knee to this fleeting popular idol. It is dangerous for them to talk of the Majesty of the people, or in any way to countenance a set of idle silly men who, for the sake of lifting themselves into notice, preach and praise, and toast this sovereignty wherever they can scrub up an audience that will listen to them. It can never become those of large landed possessions to be constantly forcing upon the common mind such false images of its greatness, when it is recollected with what heady confidence their "imagined rights" are generally asserted, and how soon the line of liberty is lost when the reins are given to these low political speculators, who see nothing, and who will see nothing but the ideal forms of happiness that solicit their admiration while they deceive their hopes. It is indeed easy herein to imitate the conduct of our Gallic prototypes, to call the people to our standard, to submit to them our judgments, to sacrifice to them our rank, and to level our characters and concerns to their scant conceptions. It is, I say, easy to do this, and we have men of large possessions and exalted situations among us who seem disposed to do it. But let them be cautious. Let them not part with their dignity too hastily or too liberally. Let them table down and have constantly in view the folly and the fate of certain of the French nobility. Let them remember that popular love is not gained, nor private ambitions gratified by such

unbecoming sacrifices. History, experience, every thing is against a speculation thus preposterous. It is the voluptuary's suggestion when the midnight revel has crazed his understanding.

——— Come, let us all take hands,
Till that the conquering wine has steeped our sense
In soft and delicate Lethe.*

There is a deep responsibility at present on every man of property, and character, and influence, among us to judge prudently and to act becomingly. The people are not to be deified; they cannot bear it. They are not to be despised: they do not deserve it, and ought not to bear it. "*Quod spiratis, quod vocem mittitis, quod formas hominum habetis, indignantur.*"† A contempt carried thus far is carried indeed beyond all bounds of patience; but we must have better authority for it than the word of a Roman tribune. In the opposite extreme, however, now lies

* Anthony and Cleopatra.

† This can only be looked upon as one of those common, but sufficiently reprehensible arts by which these tribunes were ever more discrediting the patricians. The Abbe de Mably, in quoting this passage from the historian, (*Observations on the Romans*), expresses, and very justly, some doubt of the fact. "If (says he) we may credit what Livy makes the Tribune Canuleius say, the patricians thought it strange that nature had given the same organs to the populace as to themselves." Cicero's opinion, quoted by Montesquieu, (*Spirit of Laws*. Vol 1. book v. chap. 11.) of the utility of the Roman tribunes, is not, I think, entitled to much respect. He conceived the establishing of the tribunes to be the security of the common wealth. "In fact (says he) the violence of a headless people is more terrible. A chief or head is sensible that the affair depends upon himself, and therefore he thinks; but the people, in their impetuosity, are ignorant of the danger into which they hurry themselves." (*Lib. III. de Leg.*) But who does not see that the violence of the people would rarely get to a head, were they not spurred on by the slanderous and seditious declamations of these *pestes reipublicæ*, these perpetual movers of the popular mind, against not only the indiscretions but the very virtues of their rulers.

our danger. Shew me the leader of a popular party not well affected to the state, who, for wily purposes, is sounding and playing upon the credulity of the people, and exalting their privileges, and depreciating the prerogatives of his sovereign, a large and overgrown aristocratic despot, who, with influence to draw many to his purposes, renders all who are so drawn refractory and disobedient; shew me such a man, whether in the city of Westminster or in the county of Norfolk, and I will say that a feudal baron of the eleventh century, with his tyrannies all wild about him and his defiance thrown in the very teeth of his Sovereign Lord the King, is less injurious to the tranquillity and welfare of his country than he.

A warm opponent of the measures of administration, alluding to the spirit of reform so prevalent among us at present, remarks, that "neither he nor his friends wanted to make any alarming reforms; they did not war with the mansion or the palace; they wanted no anarchy, no spoliation. For how was it to be supposed that the noble representative of the house of Russell, with all its vast property and titles—titles which were receiving fresh strength from the claims he was daily making in public gratitude; that the honourable member for Norfolk, the greatest agriculturist in the nation; that Mr. Ricardo, the first political economist of his age; that Mr. Brougham, the very first lawyer of this century; that the worthy Baronet (Sir F. Bnrnett), who had such an immense stake in the country; and that the relative of that great Commander in Egypt, should wish for anarchy or any sanguinary struggles in this country?"* I allow the reasonableness of these interrogatory remarks. It is not possible. We must excuse all such eminent characters from any wish to bring about a

* Speech of Sir Robert Wilson on celebrating the Southwark triumph.—Norwich Courier, June 26, 1819.

revolution in this country. Neither the Duke of Bedford, nor my Lord Albemarle, nor that worthy Baronet, Sir Francis Burdett, nor the first political economist, nor (*risum teneatis*) the *very first lawyer of his age*, can seriously entertain a design of so preposterous and heinous a nature. But acquitting them on this ground, how severely on the very same ground must their conduct be condemned; a conduct so entirely at variance with their bounden duty to themselves and to the community. If every nobleman, every commoner of large landed possessions, every man of rank and consequence among us, were to speak, and to act, and to propagate their notions throughout their respective counties and neighbourhoods, in the foolish inconsiderate manner which some of these gentlemen do, I have no hesitation in saying—and many will herein, I think, join with me—that it would hardly be possible to avoid revolution. With the fires of democracy kindling all around us, and “casting their livid flames, pale and dreadful,” upon every established institution, every palace and cottage of the realm, even men without more property than from hand to mouth, must hesitate to countenance, in such a crisis, such alarming symptoms. Even the common general desire to preserve the peace of the country in which he lives, would lead a man (not a citizen of America in his feelings) thus far. What then must we think of men of fortune and family, and of the first authority amongst us, being found among the abettors of this dangerous spirit of the times? To act thus, and to love their country and their kindred, and to respect themselves, seems to be totally irreconcilable. They must have either great seditions or great weaknesses brooding about them, and we can acquit them of the one only on the alternative of branding them in the face of open day with the other. Vain idolists! and despicable as vain, and destructive as despicable, to look so admir-

ingly into the stream, and imagine their powers of mind capacious enough to controul "the madness of the multitude," in the very hottest and maddest moments of their career! Ambition, well regulated, may indeed have nothing in it strikingly objectionable. But when, as in the instance of a late celebrated Whig prelate, the *vehementissima gloriæ cupido* tempts a man to undertakings which are quite beyond his grasp, and to which, by his own acknowledgment, he is entirely incompetent, such an ambition is only calculated to expose him to disgrace and derision."*

When men of rank, whether discontented or ambitious, thus league with and countenance the majesty of the people against the government of the state, we had need be upon our guard. For he who either basely or indiscreetly maketh the multitude a tool to his own private views, draweth them off, ever given to unsteadiness, from their bounden allegiance, and converteth that strength to the dissevering, which in duty ought to be, and in fact untampered with, probably would be exerted to the fixing and binding up of the community. These motions, whether arising from vanity, from weakness, from a dissatisfied or a seditious spirit, should be met, gentlemen, on our part with becoming abhorrence and the check applied in time. What can our Whig patriots be thinking of by such courtly plebeian conduct? Do they expect the eagle to take off their hats as they approach the city gates, or has the lambent flame played round their heads as omens of their future exaltation? Let them rest assured that all great men who court the people shall find their punishment in the people; that the democratic spirit soon becomes abandoned, and, to heighten the disaster, abandoned in vain; that every usurpation upon power, every violation of principle

* Memoirs of Bishop Watson. Vol. 1. p. 46.

must leave them poor and haggard ; and that at last the golden prize, for which they have so worked, and planned, and bowed and prostituted themselves, shall be carried off by some of those worthless demagogues, who, bred like insects from the mud of Nile, are constantly swarming about their steps, watching their motions, and taking every advantage of their weakness, their folly, their imprudence, and their pride. No popularity arising from dishonourable motives and used for suspicious purposes can end in any thing short of disgrace and ruin. He who ingratiates himself with the people for other than the common good, and from which the good of those who have the rule over us is inseparable, had need look to his steps and gather about him all that is commendable ; for hardly any domestic virtues will extenuate his crime, or soften his reproach, or even sometimes secure his preservation, who dares to enlist the popular voice and arm on the side of insubordination.

And what, gentlemen, let us finally enquire, what is the object of this so general and destructive appeal to the Majesty of the people ? What is the point which our adversaries, as a compacted body, wish to carry by such appeal ? Truly nothing less than that point already carried to their hands by the French and English regicides, a *republican upon the ruins of a monarchical government* ! Here end their labours and their hopes. To this dangerous verge will our Whigs and Reformers and Anarchists travel together, and here will the former probably see reason to separate from the latter, but not before the latter see greater reason to discard and denounce the former. Yes, for the furtherance and establishment as it would seem of a republican form of government, or of such a state of things as must of necessity draw such a government after it, have all parties adverse to the administration of the realm, and forgetful of minor differences, as they effect to consider them, among

each other, entered into an unholy league. On this head, the crown of their bad wishes, we are, I trust, most compleatly at issue with them; as compleatly so as they are herein in unison with revolutionary France. A little consideration will shew us that we are not at issue with them in vain.

On the gross scale, we think a republican government a thing to be dreaded; they think it a thing to be desired. We think that no sacrifices are too great to stave off the demon of democracy; they think no sacrifices too precious to introduce and establish it. There is great danger in republican principles, not only because of their evil tendency, but because they are calculated to make their way into the common mind, not easily reducing its feelings to the test of a cold experience, by the nourishment of vain and imposing expectations. Serious people indeed may and will reprobate such principles, because they feel their insufficiency; because they know their nature; because they recognize, in the page of history, their unhinging tendencies; and because they are aware of their total inadequacy to the production and promotion of human happiness through such gradual, calculating, sober means, as are alone competent to such production. Still the republican fervour goes progressively forward, imprisoning and dazzling weak understandings, and silently sapping the whole frame of monarchical government; and working night and day upon the various passions, and follies, and crimes of men, it can hardly be supposed to work without effect. The stablest of governments must in time feel the influence of these warping principles, and the dissenting doctrines so perseveringly taught, aided by Whig eloquence both in and out of the house of commons, must bind up in one almost indestructible form, both all that is evil thought, and said, and done against existing institutions in a free state. It cannot be well otherwise, where men con-

sider and consult their own desires with a perfect disregard of the expence of obtaining them. If every caterer for power is to court the people by the sacrifice of some part or principle of the constitution, what shall we by and bye have left? If every candidate for popular favour is to compliment away the prerogatives of royalty and the precedencies of rank; if this and that obscure demagogue is to deliver his lessons of sedition and blasphemy as freely and as forcibly as he pleases, we may soon look to the corruption of all the lower, and to the fettering of all the higher orders of the state.

Well might the poet advise, speaking of the nature of democratical governments, to "flee from petty tyrants to the throne." There are no greater Bashaws on the face of the earth than, the sure growth of such a rank soil, ambitious men of property. They hold all they possess in trust for their desires, and, by means open to hardly any other description of human beings, can satisfy those desires to the full, exorbitant as they shew themselves. "Their eyes swell with fatness, and they do even what they lust." The most despotic monarch equals them not in despotism. The most unfeeling is no match for them in cruelty. The most relentless can never come up to their seared consciences and total unacquaintance with remorse. Wealth and power are their domestic laws, their offspring, their idols. Nothing see they in nature, in reason, in revelation, if it be not written in letters charactering them forth as the mighty upon earth. Nor God, nor Providence, nor futurity, nor immortality, care they for, if this dirty dingy spot, with gratifications suited to their low aspirings, could but be their "rest for ever." The states of Greece, to rid themselves of these plagues, were glad to come under the protection of a single master. Rome became not again monarchical, with all her prejudices, at the expulsion of the Tarquins, until she was fairly

worn out and sick of republicanism ; until she felt even the tyrannies of the Cæsars a relief from the injustice, the seditions, the cold-hearted cruelties of her democracy. And England, at the restoration, (well might they term it the happy restoration,) told us what she thought of the canting piety, the long-drawn hypocritical visages, the total intolerance, the consummate assurance, the coarse and fierce and blasphemous rule of the Protectorate. Of this crazed period, galling equally to our remembrance by its miseries and its shames, it is impossible to speak in terms of adequate indignation. We must stretch our conceptions, and fancy what it was.

The people are, I know, many of them ripe for democracy ; for though too poor perhaps to be ambitious, they are yet easily misled, and with every voucher from experience to guard them against it. Democracy is a desolation throughout. In what republican state have the people, any more than their haughty lords, ever been happy ? In none—positively in no one state of that description, ancient or modern, have they known what secure enjoyment and domestic comfort were. Ever at the beck of one tyrant or other, their lives have been a perpetual jeopardy. Neither in Holland, nor in Venice, in their best days, had the people for many generations past much concern. The power in all cases gets into the hands of a few, and those few (if they cut not each others throats in the mean while, as is commonly the case) so manage matters as to retain it in few hands, without ever suffering the people to taste of the sweets, or even of the bare common advantages of it. The feudal barons of England were, I think, men in a good measure of this description, and kept their vassals in a state of impotent subjection, thus proving how nearly allied is all despotism in human nature, whatever be the form of government under which it may range itself, or the designation by which it rules.

To the sovereign power, be it remembered, and not to any men or measures formed upon our present Whig school, which would only have more spread and settled the evil, the people were chiefly indebted for a refuge from these haughty pests.

But though a republican government be adapted neither to the wishes nor to the wants of men, neither to the great nor to the lowly, neither to those who have nor to those who have not possessions, and is totally irreconcilable with virtuous habits and modest merit in every rank of life, yet suffer me, gentlemen, to tell you to whom and to what it is adapted. It is adapted, and most intimately, to aspiring men of property and to men of aspiring and unprincipled minds without property; to bold and infidel speculators upon morals and monarchy, who fancy they can better get forward by the overthrow than by the support of an established order of things. They in particular who are infidels in religion (as, judging them by any received formulary of devotion, many of our modern sectaries and high reformers are) make daring and dangerous politicians under every species of government. For acknowledging mere convenience, and sometimes even mere fancy as the foundation for any form of it, they will readily attempt to change that form when the supposed convenience no longer exists, or when some greater advantages to themselves may await the alteration. Such characters are cut out for revolution, and are usually every where the leading springs of it. They do not indeed boast of any peculiar depth of discernment, but they have better qualities for the work of demagogueship about them. They are presuming, fearless, shameless; accomplishments far before either ability or integrity. Men cannot, in fact, though it seems a hard thing to say, be too wicked under republican governments. The game which they are there called upon to play, is a game of craft against craft, of injustice against

injustice, of enormity against enormity ; a partnership in villainies, where no one will accuse a brother of the firm so long as an opposing firm remain. Republican government is a government of corruption throughout, whose spirit is embraced by and whose archives are accessible only to kindred minds. The great leaders that compose it, evermore of a thorough-paced infidel complexion, must have panders to their iniquity, flatterers of their vanity, feeders of their lusts, companions in their follies, abettors of their crimes, absolvers of their past offences, and encouragers in their future ones. They can, in fact, under such a government only live by continued and increasing pollutions, beginning at the fountain head, and driving on and spreading over every part of their body politic. These aspiring demagogues of democracy must render the *custos* of their conscience a *sinecure*. They must have no moral sense, no principles of integrity, no notions of honour, no feelings of shame, no yearnings of humanity, no shudderings at the worm that never dies, no hope or fear, in short, of either death, or judgment, or heaven, or hell. They must be too wise to believe, too hardened to care about such "tales told by an idiot." They must, despising God or Devil, carry this world before them ; and, if their clay rot not in annihilation, settle matters in the next as well as they can.

Gentlemen, let us countenance the generation of sectarian and republican sentiments among us, (for like soul and body they are linked together) and we shall cherish the viper that will sting us into madness. The breed of demagogues undergoes no alteration, nor is affected by time, place, or circumstance. The Grecian, the Roman, the French, the English, will be found all of the same wretched cast ; all affecting a love for liberty, for the people, for their country, and spurning them underfoot the moment they obtain their wishes. If these men were not

among the basest, they would be among the most contemptible of the human race. But they have that about them sufficiently capable of keeping every state in alarm. Incendiaries are always dreadful. These contaminators of the public mind, these disturbers of the public peace, never pause for the recordations of common sense. Slaves, miserable slaves to the worst passions of our nature, they sweep on resolved to leave to succeeding generations no chance for excelling them in folly or flagitiousness. They ask no leave to play the idiot, or to assume the hypocrite. They at once divest themselves of the restraints of decorum, and take up with the refuse of all that wisdom and virtue are willing to cast behind them. Distorted in their views and defiled in their motives, they seem made to shew us human nature under its last stage of abasement. There is, after certain plungings in guilt, a desperation attendant on their conduct, which nor earth, nor heaven, can arrest the progress of. They are without check, without terror. The very grave shall open before them and not deter them from their criminal meditations.— They might shrink back with an evanescent horror, but the firm and settled purpose of their souls would still remain. Ancient republics have produced examples of this awful cast, and modern ones have lived, and basked, and gloried in them. Wherever such characters, all dreaded as they must be, are suffered to unconsecrate the public morals and to inflame the public mind, Germanicus shall never want his Piso, nor celebrity its slow, dark, certain path to death.

Let us be careful then, gentlemen, how we permit, how we directly or indirectly countenance the increase of republican notions in this free and favoured country ; a country made and continued free by our hitherto wise rejection of them. The fall of every state may be predicted that allows the popular part of its

constitution to usurp upon the monarchical, and the popular voice to overcome the reason of things, and to set itself in opposition to whatever is established for the common good.* A politic government should suffer no man to dip his hands in disaffection.—Boldness, nurtured in infamy, knows not restraint, when it hath once fleshed itself with crime. Progression in guilt is a mark of man's originally corrupt nature. The hardening of the mind is an awful process, but it is sometimes a speedy one. It increases with the number the depth of its offences, and where it casts off fear, and where it casts off shame, there is no stop till it arrive at a consummation of its iniquities by a total despair of ever returning or wishing to return to righteousness. If, indeed, we could keep republican principles and governments to their true point of greatness; if we could take them in their ages of glory and there fix them in an everlasting rest, few would perhaps be equal to them, none would be so admired. Where men seek public good through the medium of virtue; where they consecrate this good before their altars and on their tombs; where the Spartan mother can meet her departed sons without shedding a tear; where Pedarctus, missing his election, can rejoice that there are three hundred more fit to counsel the state than himself; where

* What a picture does the Athenian republic present to us in her *acme* of extravagance after the battle of Mantinea. Then it was that "any adventurer in politics, who had ready elocution, could interfere in every department of government;" that "ratification by the people was required for every measure of administration;" that "the most delicate foreign interests were discussed before the people at large;" that "the contending orators abused foreign powers and one another with equal grossness;" that "propositions rejected in the morning were often ratified before night, and condemned again at the next meeting of the assembly;" and that "as soon as a treaty was concluded, it was the business of the opposing orators to persuade the people that they had been deceived and misled."——Mitford's History of Greece. Vol. 4. 232, &c.

Cynægyrus can manifest the devotedness of his soul by suffering that soul to ebb out and loose itself in immortality by little and little ; where Themistocles can take his poison to avoid arming him against his country ; where Dion, expelling the tyrants, can bury in his bosom the ingrattitudes of Syracuse ; where Mutius can feel his patriotism without feeling his pain ; where Régulus can return to his torture but cannot part with an atom of his honor, and Decius, for the safety of Rome, is content upon Rome, and upon all the world just opening in beauty before him to close his eye for ever—where feelings of this god-like description burst upon us, we rejoice in our common human nature ; we confess the soul of man to be naturally fitted for grandeur, and while we adore the spirit of such pure republicanism, we sigh to think how soon its purity must vanish ! For glory obtained leads weak minds to repose ; leads strong minds to high and sinful ambitions ; leads crafty minds to increase of power through every sacrifice of integrity ; and alas ! where heroic deeds end, as this same Greece and Rome can too mournfully testify, heroic villainies have too often began. Pausanias in vain covered himself with laurels in the field of Plataea ; Lysander in vain demolished the walls of the Pyraeus and laid the power of Athens in the dust ; the consular honours of Spurius Cassius could not save him from the fatality of his intrigues, and even the valour of Manlius, when, with dark aspirings, he exalted the people and defamed the Patricians, did not, alas ! secure the scene of his virtues from becoming the avenger of his crimes, and the grave that sadly buried up all recollection of his past glorious services !

It would be easy, gentlemen, to increase these points of resemblance between our present reformers and the late French revolutionists. In almost every step indeed that is taken, the one will be found treading on, or very nearly on, the path of the other. The

French revolutionists and the English reformers will be discovered both using the same high and dauntless language—both making their strongest attacks upon the most sacred parts of the monarchical edifice—both systematically denouncing all that think not and act not with them—both systematically degrading the church and the clergy, with a view of bringing about the confiscation of ecclesiastical as the precursor of that of lay property—both affecting to consider the present times as peculiarly favourable to the extension of freedom and liberty—both pretending to admire the form and constitution of their respective governments, the better by such fair guises to insure their destruction—both making their rebellious movements under as lenient a Sovereign and as mild an administration of the laws as ever obtained—and both, in the midst of their reproaches against their enemies, constantly denouncing and anathematizing their friends. It would be easy, I repeat, to insist upon these additional points of resemblance, and to draw out the scheme of revolution in this country as it was reduced to practice in that. For we know who it was that gained upon the popular mind in France, and we see who it is that is gaining upon it among ourselves. We are aware that their *National Assembly* consisted, for the more part, of pettifogging unprincipled lawyers, ignorant professors of physic, and the very lowest order of the French clergy. These were their efficient and convenient instruments, and, in the event of revolution, would probably for a like reason be ours too. The same unabashed insolence would obtrude itself into every department; the same dregs of the learned professions would occupy every post of eminence; and the same subtle selection would be made of men who have heads to contrive and hearts to execute; who feel nothing as injustice that accords with policy, nor acknowledge any thing as crime that insures success; who have lack enough of conscience

for every perfidy, and remorse of conscience for none.

All these, however, we must leave as subjects of individual meditation. The compass of a Letter will not permit any more extended notice of their political societies, their philosophical dejunès, their diatribes of revolutionary eloquence, or the varied ætiology of their intended future procedure. For the same reason I must be constrained to pass by the still nearer, and equally fatal points of resemblance between the transactions that took place in the reign of Charles I. and by which the destruction of both church and state was sealed, and those that, under different godly shapes and with considerable stage effect, but in the same totally ungodly spirit, are running riot upon society in the present reign. Enough may, however, in the foregoing points of comparison, already have been insisted upon to put us on our guard against “the nature and tendency of the present spirit of the times,” and against any encouragement of that leveling, liberalizing system which is tearing up the land-marks of the constitution, and beating in all the gradations and distinctions of rank to which man, in his civilized state, is indebted for his happiness. Contemplate I beseech you, gentlemen, the picture I have drawn. The features are, I confess, rudely sketched, but the closelier you view them the more they may grow upon recollection, and the more convince you that, whoever among us wishes to turn every market-place in England into the Campus Martius of Rome, and to fill the kingdom with seditions and tumults, need only, like our Westminster and Norfolk county leaders, to sanction republican demagogues and leave the doctrines they disseminate to do their work.

If then—to sum up my reflections upon this *second* head of my Letter—if you believe with me that the prevailing spirit of the times is such as I have repre-

sented it ; if you think that this spirit in a good measure originated with, and is now supported by those who, under the idlest pretexts, have seceded, and daily are seceding from our establishment, seconded by various descriptions of its members who, though remaining in it, have yet never been friendly to it ; if you feel disposed to acknowledge, that sufficient points of resemblance have, in these pages, been adduced to render it probable that our reformers may at this moment, in their doctrines and practices, be following on the line of the late French revolution ; if you are persuaded with me, that there is but too much consonance in the sentiments and feelings of the various parties in this country bandied against government, whatever be the denomination they may rank under, or the leaders they may attach them to ; and if, finally, you are convinced (as for the safety of the nation and of your own landed possessions I will humbly presume to hope you are) that the points in dispute between them and us are neither few in number, nor small in consequence, but that, on all the great and leading articles of political faith, we differ from them as much, and they from their revolutionary French prototypes as little as is conceivable—if *freeholders of NORFOLK* and *freeholders of ENGLAND*, (for I address myself to all) such be your genuine feelings, such your fixed opinions, such your solemn convictions, what remains but that under so awful an emergency you draw out your strong line of duty, and at all future elections reject as your representatives in parliament every man, be his private claims what they may, who, under any pretence whatever, can bring himself to advocate principles of this alarming nature, and make choice of those only whose sentiments upon the large and vital questions of state go with your own, and whose hearts are fixed, where you must wish to see them fixed, UPON THE PROUD AND ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE COUNTRY ; THE CONSTITUTED AND TRULY VENERA-

BLE AUTHORITIES OF THE REALM BOTH IN CHURCH AND STATE.

And now, gentlemen, to come to the final division of my subject, and assuredly the most important, permit me to set before you *what I conceive this line of duty to ourselves, to our children, and to our country imperatively to demand at our hands, in such an alarming and unprecedented crisis of affairs.* It requires of us then, in the first place, very seriously to believe that the nation is, at this moment, not simply in danger, but in peculiar and imminent danger. It, in the next place, requires us to act upon this belief, by instantly discarding all minor differences and standing up, as one man, for our venerable establishments in church and state. And, lastly, it demands of us to call upon government to come forward, and, in an emergency so awful, honestly and without fear to do its duty by the people, by that grand concentrated mass, rank above rank, of the inhabitants of the British empire, which may legally, and proudly, and securely be termed the *Majesty of the people.*

Let it not be said that in disclosing the pollutions of the age and warning others against them, we open a wider field of censure than is needed, and use a fuller severity than either the evil deserves, or than a staid wholesome policy would perhaps recommend. Alas! the policy hitherto hath, I fear, been all on the other side of the question. In the midst of a state of most riotous insubordination it hath abetted by not punishing the departures from obedience, and its "tender mercies" towards the offenders have, as is commonly the case, heavily dropt down on society in the shape of "cruelties." There is no pleasure in speaking evil of men or things. Not willingly, believe me, do we wound; not officiously do we condemn; not without a deep and holy concern do we consent to expose any set of men, or any disorganizing

doctrines. But where the necessity is pressing, and a kingdom represented as tottering to its fall, we must do our duty, though, to do it effectually, involve us in as much of suffering as we make others suffer. Whatever may be the result of such a conduct on our part, the obligation of it seems imperative.

I would be unwilling to go to extremes in any censure. I know the tendency, the danger of it. We are naturally carried forward to a too large praise of our own opinions, and of those who, on general or great occasions, think and act with us, and a too unsparing censure of persons and principles opposed to us. Where the passions are awake the judgment is sometimes inclined to repose, and feelings that are too warm may discredit both the understanding and the heart. Were it possible to know who are and who are not honestly defending a virtuous, or even a doubtful cause, few of the former description, whatever might be their speculative errors, would fall within the line of an improvident censure. A difference of sentiment in religion or politics must not cut men off from mutual intercourse, especially under so free a government as our own. Nothing can justify a harshness of this sort, but the belief, and on good grounds, that such sentiments are entertained in an evil spirit, are connected with evil views, are intended in an evil hour to be acted upon, or at any rate are promulgated in a manner or at a time that must render them pernicious. The sober, serious, tranquil opponents of existing institutions, whether in or out of the pale of the establishment, we can bear no enmity against. Enmity? We can give them the right hand of fellowship and rejoice to give it. We can tolerate their opinions, their prejudices, their partial conceptions, their fond assumptions, their erroneous deductions. We are all alike the frail children of mortality, gathering up our forms and images of things as we can. Evidence works upon the human mind

with an infinitely varied force. It differs in its strength, its clearness, its effect, in the manner every way in which it takes the understanding and models the opinion. We cannot all bring the same capacities, though we may have all the like aptitudes, to the acquirement of knowledge. We must therefore look upon speculative error with a lenient eye. Where the heart is good and the intentions are set properly, we can afford it. We can leave such opponents to their reflection as the best security of their virtue and of the public peace. It will convince them that such modest views as they entertain and advocate are treated with contempt by the great body of their reforming brethren, and that they had better desist from even the appearance of opposition to an established government till they see how far that government, aided by the counsels and support of those who wish her well, is able to maintain herself against those who have no wish but for her overthrow.

Lenity however, gentlemen, must not be permitted to draw too largely upon justice. The manner of every writing and defence will depend, in a great measure, on the kind of adversaries we have to deal with, on the mode of attack which they themselves chuse to adopt, on the language which they use, the arts which they employ, the objects they have in view, and, in short, on the age in which we live, the manners and principles incident thereto, and the circumstances altogether in which we find ourselves placed. Where, in the vindication of an established order of things, we have to oppose us to good and humble minds, we will be most diffident and apprehensive, and humble ourselves; but where we have to enter into the very flames of contention, and to dispute every inch of ground with scared consciences and hearts that know neither guilt nor penitence, with reformers who are already dividing their country into revolutionary departments, and bible society

jesuits who dispose of their piety as the Dominican sold his indulgences, and infidels who in the name of the Deity are daily employed in doubting his existence and debasing his worship—where we have adversaries of this desperate stamp to combat with, we neither ask nor give quarter; we draw the sword and throw the scabbard into the sea.

The first duty then, gentlemen, which we owe to our country in the present emergency, is to persuade ourselves, and evermore to have that persuasion before us, that this country is in very serious and imminent danger. Nothing will be done effectually, and commensurate with the peril on our part, if it be not done in conformity with this feeling. All will be weak, irrelevant, and without soul that is attempted on any ground, opinion, or apprehension short of this. It is the great art and object of our adversaries, who so well know what our real situation is, and so little wish that we should know it ourselves, to make us believe that we are in no danger. It is, I say, their great art and object; for, this obtained, they bridge the chaos, and at once pave and smooth the rough ways to their revolutionizing purposes. Thus they tell us, (for they have no shame about them if the want of it will do them service) that our habeas corpus act has been unnecessarily suspended; that our meetings for petitioning have been unjustifiably thwarted; that our magistrates have been armed with an unconstitutional and uncalled for authority; that licentious publications have been prosecuted with an inordinate severity; that all trash of this nature will run itself out and die of its own insignificancy; that surely we are not alarmed at a contemptible rabble of insane reformers; that our laws are not so poor as to be unable of themselves to restrain such impotent adversaries; nor our government so reduced as to fear such impotent endeavours; nor our established church so weak as to be troubled at a set of

enthusiasts, whose folly it ought rather to pity, and whose force it ought rather to despise. What, say they, affect to tremble with a large military force in time of profound peace? Affect alarm when the royal prerogative was never at a greater height? When the majorities in both houses of parliament were never so impressively decisive? When the continental powers, bound up in a holy alliance, were never so little mischievous or so overflowingly amicably disposed? What, in the midst of such plenitude of political security, affect to suspect that security, and to be alarmed at a disaffection which is merely the effervescence of the public mind against ministers, and has nothing at all to do with either king, or constitution, or church, or state?*

Thus it is that, in the common cant of sedition, these men talk. But waving for a while the inconsistency of this mode of ridiculing us out of our fears, let us go a little further into the matter. That the country really is in danger may be evidenced, perhaps, from what has been already insisted upon, viz. from the origin of the present bad spirit; from the prevalence of dissent; from the tendency, in a large part of our population, to republicanism; from the union of all parties against our establishment in church and state, and from the opinions, decidedly anarchical, entertained and avowed by these parties. And if to these we add other circumstances that will meet our view as we proceed, such as the great increase of crime, the violence of factions, the number and zeal of low instruments among us, the apparent change in

* In this paragraph I have condensed the substance, as nearly as I am able, of the various arguments brought against our apprehensions of danger, by the various descriptions of adversaries to whom we are opposed. As far as our own country is concerned in this line of argument, I beg leave to refer my readers to the eloquent harangues more particularly of the Earl of Albemarle and Mr. Coke.

our national manners, the general spread throughout the country of fanaticism, the systematized opposition every where prevalent, the various seditious movements in our own country, accompanied by a sort of undefined general expectance and dread of something to happen, together with the movements, equally seditious and revolutionary, in almost every part of Europe, we shall have, I fear, without taking other causes into consideration which I wish it were in my power to omit, but too abundant and melancholy proof that we never, as an empire, were in greater danger than at present, never so much needed a foresight, measured to our peril, and a spirit answerable to our foresight.

Gentlemen, it will not be possible in the compass of the remaining part of this letter, to take these subjects, connected all of them with our present line of duty, into consideration, and to treat them in the full manner they deserve. I can merely shadow them out, and, thus imperfectly depicted, bequeath them to your reflection. Wherever we turn our eyes, we see a mighty mass of disaffection combined against the government of the realm. It is not opposition, it is not the spirit of party; but it is rank and desperate faction that pervades the land. There was, I think, no time when such faction was not, or was without danger, though certainly there may have been many periods, in both the history of mankind and in our history, when that danger was less apparent and alarming, and less every way intitled to attention.— But since the reformation; since the invention of the art of printing; since, in consequence thereof, the spread of sounder and better principles, of larger and fuller knowledge, accompanied alas! by a spread still more extensive of principles subversive of every notion of revealed, and almost indeed of natural religion, and of a knowledge that has only tended to the corruption of society, by implanting idle and pernicious

notions, of the origin and nature of government into the common mind, the danger has been expanding itself in every quarter, and is at length become, beyond all former comparison, pressing and frightful.

Never quiet long together, nor ever using precisely the same means, there is now a constant working of sedition among us. It puts on no particular form, but assumes all forms; it goes out & effects its purposes where it can, when it can, and as it can. But, be the mode what it may, the people are the great object of seduction. To turn them from obedience to their rulers in church and state, is what is systematically aimed at. All the politics of our adversaries are at variance with the settled laws and constitution of the land. All their religion springs from opposition to the religion of the land, defiling the very fountain head of Christianity by insidious infidel translations of the bible, and by a depreciation and studied contempt of our received translation. Add to this, that many, I may say most of the public journals and papers, and periodical records, are on the side of insubordination. I care not how poor some of these may be, if they circulate, if they go their regular rounds and do their constant work. They will never return void so long as they accomplish what they design, the disaffecting and fanaticizing of their readers. And we have unfortunately (as to our devotional acquirements) got to that point of general superficial information, that the poorest arguments are, with many, of the same validity with the strongest, and the writings of the errantest enthusiasts as well thought of, and, I fear, as frequently read as those of a Tillotson, a Butler, a Paley, or a Marsh. It is indeed the holy guises of this description of our adversaries that undo us. While they work under the form of bible societies, gospel societies, societies for the conversion of the Jews, teaching, preaching, propagating societies, they work under efficient forms.—They take a part in every thing, and

in every thing out machiavel us. They do us more harm because they do it under the semblance of seconding, of helping, of uniting with us for good. They let the spiritual pomp of their proceedings appear, and thus conceal the temporal ends of them. Their piety, all richly caparisoned, they give to the public ; their policy they keep to themselves.*

I am sure I know not where we are to look for proofs of a revolutionary spirit if we cannot find them under the sources already adverted to. There is a full, perfect, open democracy, travelling throughout the land, and every where stirring the tumultuous wills and affections of our population. Yet they tell us we are in no fear, that there is nothing to be alarmed at, nothing to move the public indignation against ; that all is going on well, and that it is our own guilt that makes us cowards ; the consciousness of our oppressions that sets us upon fancying a disposition to revolt where no disposition shews itself. But how, gentlemen, I beseech you, how do our adversaries make these their lulling asseverations good ? With what opiate do they rock us to rest amid the paroxisms of our apprehension ? How do they exorcise these crude conceptions of a distempered brain and bring us back to reason ? How ? why to be sure by their stubborn *proofs* of the orderly spirit

* Of the " British and Foreign Bible Society," were it not in danger of being considered as out of season in a Letter of this kind, I could say much. Since the very effectual attacks upon it by Bishop Marsh, it is become, I am willing to hope, shorn of much of its established dignity. It, however, still retains a large influence, and I think in no inconsiderable degree administers to the prevailing spirit of the times. With such advocates as Dean Milner I wonder not at its continued celebrity ; but I do wonder that a mind so discerning as his should not yet have found reason for an alteration of sentiment. To yield up our opinions is not pleasant, but where they are untenable it is an act of duty, and will become, in the sober estimate of our fellow creatures, an act of virtue.

which prevails among them. Hearken to their impressive language. They tell us that "if a reform does not immediately take place, a revolution must;" that "those who have no votes in the election of members ought to pay no taxes;" that "if the people had the spirit they ought to have, they would refuse and resist the collection of supplies imposed upon them by parliament;" that "those who planned and executed the late war ought to come to the gallows;" that "a close union among the reformers was necessary, and that, avoiding minor differences, they should push for the accomplishment of the main point;" that "each should fancy himself the centre of his own circle;" that "it was to be regretted Wat Tyler had been so treacherously slain by the Mayor of London;" that "all nature was in motion, and that it was nonsense to declaim against a revolution."* They further assure us, that "the iniquities practised in our courts were not to be met with there (in America.) Here there was no justice to be had under any circumstances in which the government was concerned. Formerly, juries were packed; but until lately this packing was not openly avowed. But now, even the judges on the bench attempted to justify it"†—that certain individuals "would never have been so treated, (by government) had it not been intended that their graves should prevent them from ever telling the tale of their woes"‡—that "Lord Sidmouth had been

* See the various speeches of our Westminster reformers, from whence these extracts are taken, and those delivered at the Crown and Anchor dinner on the charring of Sir Francis Burdett, July 13, 1818.

† See Lord Cochrane's speech at the Crown and Anchor tavern, for the purpose of opening a subscription for the individuals imprisoned during the late suspension act.—Star, Feb. 3d, 1818.

‡ See Mr. Wooler's speech upon the same occasion. I think the speeches here delivered calculated to prove that the freedom of the press is in full vigour among us, and that nothing short of au

guilty of high treason, by intercepting the petitions of the people, and stopping up the legal channel of communication between the Prince Regent and the subject"*—that for the promotion of reform "means should be taken for establishing a regular communication from one extremity of the kingdom to the other"†—that "the principles which seated the House of Brunswick on the British throne, were those first and best principles, *that, as all civil institutions are for the benefit of the governed, not of the governor, so when the governor has ceased to fulfil his duty to the people, the duty of obedience on their part ceases also*"‡—that (very natural deductions, it must be confessed, from such premises) "when a government was guilty of destroying or diminishing the happiness of the people, such government acted in direct opposition to the will of heaven, and rebellion against it was an imperative duty"§—that "Mr. Cobbet should be invited to return to take his place at the head of the people"||—that "they had petitioned in vain for their just rights, and that nothing

almost continued suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act can keep the country within any chance of escape from revolution. A more disgusting instance of foul-mouthed liberty never exhibited itself than in these "simple and eloquent appeals," as the chairman, at the conclusion of the business, very modestly termed them.

* Meeting at Stockport. Evening Mail, July 5, 1819.

† Meeting at Ashton-under-Line. Ibid, June 21.

‡ These are the revolutionary sentiments which the Editor of the Norwich Courier, of June 6, 1818, is not afraid to entertain and circulate in the present state of the country. May I be suffered to ask, are the great Whig leaders of the county of Norfolk prepared to countenance this doctrine or not? If they dare not adventure thus far, how can we look on the Norwich Courier, (as from the respectable authority already alluded to we are assured we may) as their accredited paper, the genuine expositor of their faith and feelings? If they *dare* thus far adventure —————

§ Meeting at Stockport. Evening Mail, July 5.

|| Ibid. Evening Mail, July 7.

but physical force and the strong arm of the people would do"*—that the people be urged "to apply the four-sheaved block of liberty, equality, annual parliaments, and universal suffrage, that would tear the vast fabric of tyranny and superstition from its base, though the strain would be tremendous"†—that "the example of the Irish rebellion be held out to the people,"‡ and that "a national convention should be formed, modelled from that of France; that the whole country should proceed with petitions to London; that the delegates should not wait for the tedious forms of the house of commons, but go directly to the speaker's chair, and insist on their demands being granted; if they were not attended to, the convention was then to act, and the existing government be destroyed"§—And Sir Charles Wolseley, an honourable baronet of an ancient house in Staffordshire, and the Stockport chairman for the

* Meeting at Stockport. Evening Mail, July 7.

† Ibid. Evening Mail, July 5.

‡ Meeting on Hunslet Moor, June 14. The number of the persons present, we are informed, was about ten thousand, and all of the *labouring classes*, and the subjects discussed *wholly political*. Joseph Johnson, Esq. of Manchester, gives a hint too which meetings of this kind will not be backward to work upon. He remarks, "how singular it is that the labouring classes should be in such extreme distress in a country abounding with every improvement, both in agriculture and manufactures, which the present state of science could furnish; and speaks with detestation of the measures adopted to prevent the importation of corn—a measure calculated merely to serve the landed proprietors, while rents and taxes are increased and the labourers' wages reduced." What is this calculated for short of inviting an Agrarian law, and of setting that useful body of men against their employers.—See Evening Mail, June 21.

§ The delivery of these sentiments appears from the evidence on the trial of Bagguley, Drummond, and Johnston, at Chester, when these mob orators harangued about five thousand people at Sandy Brow, near Stockport.—See the Norwich Mercury of April 24, 1819.

day, consecrates all these pacific propositions intended to allay the alarms of the good people of England, by swearing to be "faithful to the cause, so long as his heart's blood should flow from his heart,"* observing, in conclusion, "that his political career commenced in France: that he was one of those who mounted the ramparts of the bastille at the commencement of the revolution in that country; and if he did that for France, he should never shrink from attacking the bastilles of his own country."*

This, gentlemen, you will allow does not look much like a demonstration of the chastised and quiet spirit of the times. The specimens here laid before you are not selected. They are taken as they came in my way; parts picked up here and there as they happened to fall from the great mass of sedition. The matter and the manner of these self-constituted regenerators are equally alarming. Their meetings, convened under constitutional covers, are almost invariably converted into a sort of revolutionary conventions. The reformers of Stockport issue out their circulars to the population in their vicinity, for the purpose of forming a national union. The "committee of two hundred" send forth their concordats for pretty nearly the same purpose; and as "public integrity and talent are the great objects of their solicitude at this important crisis," HENRY HUNT, Esq. is therefore "invited to the chair."* supported by Mr. Cobbett, Mr. Gale Jones, Mr. Wooler, Dr. Watson, Mr. A. Thistlewood, Mr. Johnstone, of Manchester, Mr. Taylor, of Norwich,† &c. &c. This, and more

* Evening Mail, July 5.

† What Mr. Taylor is this? We have so many of the name that we never know which horse to clap the saddle on. By the bye since the printing of my note at page 80, I have been informed that Mr. Taylor, of Wymondham, is, after all, no other than our celebrated delegate, Mr. Edward Taylor, of Norwich. I am glad

of a like stamp and tendency, transacting in every part of the kingdom, and all upon a similar principle of association, and with views and feelings nearly similar though more kept in, must surely open every man's eyes to the danger of our situation. If what has been here adduced (and the daily papers are perpetually pouring forth fresh accumulations) does not amount to sedition, to sedition of the highest and blackest cast; if it does not even venture, in some of its dark shadowings out, to the very verge of treason, I know not where we are to look for such high crimes and misdemeanors against the state.* Even allowing that

of it. It is some comfort not to find two of precisely the same cast of soul in the same county. When the scrawl was produced for performers "through all Athens," in the "interlude before the Duke and Duchess on their wedding-day at night," they were obliged to set down Nick Bottom the weaver, for Pyramus; and Francis Flute the bellows-mender, for Thisby; while the Lion's part, which was done *ex-tempore*, "for it was nothing but *roaring*," fell to Snug the joiner. This was thought, for the device of it, pretty well in those times. But our blue and white conjurers, a deputation probably from the "Swan Inn senate," beat them hollow. For here they send you forth a man with two souls as it were, animating the same body, and by an admirable legerdemain contrivance, capable of doing the work of Bottom and Flute and Snug, and the whole "propertied and rehearsing" tribe of them put together. Thus Punch plays the Devil at Bartlemy fair one day and Doctor Faustus the next; and thus go we to Norwich, or go we to Wymondham, or take we a peep at the National Convention assembled for affairs of state in Smithfield, there is your orator, president, delegate, nominee, still before you, and the *quod petis hic est* staring every hot and thirsty reformer full in the face as usual.

* This Smithfield meeting has been held, and thanks to the efficient regulations of government, and not to the temperance of these reformers, nothing of harm has resulted from it. But I put it to every man's solemn conscience, whatever be his politics, whether associations of this kind, so conducted, so principled, so ramifying themselves through the empire, and so gathering upon us in every quarter, and every where in a systematic form, can be contemplated without alarm. Let us consider too how many they

these proceedings merely marked an innovating spirit, still it is of a very alarming figure, and we need not, gentlemen, be told that to live in an age of innovation is to live in a most perilous age. For innovation is a bold and working power; a brainless ardour, scorning to look behind and incapable of seeing before it; caring nothing for antiquity, nothing for posterity, but intrenching itself in its own sufficiencies, and making light of that slow and solemn experience of years, by which alone man, full of error and easily imposed upon, is justified in legislating for the public good. But where the spirit to overturn, without the care to preserve, or the wisdom, on a better founda-

implicate in their feelings, in their views, in their prospects of success; how many that waver and look on, and bear and balance themselves between chances, and are ready, with greater caution but with not much greater virtue, to countenance or discountenance, to join with or desert them according to the contingencies of their fate. I would refer my readers to the conduct of the celebrated member of parliament, Mr. Alderman Waithman, upon this occasion; a man of a full reforming soul, but of a mean and contemptible mind; a man with whom, in the event of the approach of real convulsionary movements, his country would hardly, I think, dare to trust the protection of the meanest part of the public possessions. Well might the Lord Mayor represent the conduct of this guardian of the peace of the capital "to have been most outrageous;" well might he add, and thousands will herein praise him for his spirit and join with him in his judgment, that if Mr. Alderman Waithman "had been guilty of such conduct in public, he would most undoubtedly have had him taken into custody." And yet this Alderman Waithman is, forsooth, a Whig, (of as vile a description as the term will admit of) a lover of the constitution, a lover of his country, and one that desires to preserve the tranquillity of the realm; to preserve that tranquillity which he and his party, well seconded by Mr. Coke and my Lord Albemarle, are every day, and in every part of the empire, by the influence of their insane and wretched opinions, copied and hawked about by every inflammatory meeting throughout the kingdom, disturbing and destroying. The proceedings at the court of common-council, Guildhall, are well worth attention. See a very well detailed relation of them in the Evening Mail, July 23 to July 26.

tion, to establish prevails, it must needs be an evil and fearful age. Tacitus, with his usual profoundness, has somewhere, I think, remarked, that they who consult about revolting have already revolted. He is right. Our very entertainment of bad views, our very forming of bad purposes, is an intimation that the execution of such purposes is intended to follow. The moment we depart from integrity all the avenues of the heart lie open to defilement.

One great object with our adversaries is to get the population of the country on their side; and, with a view to this, they are endeavouring to change the national manners and habits of thinking, and in some, I fear, a serious degree are effecting it. Indeed all despicable factions in a state have a natural tendency to this point. For they stick not at unhinging old foundations and trampling upon every thing sacred. It is the temper of the public mind, not sufficiently formed and principled, and therefore often turned about by slight and varying winds, which the unquiet spirits of a state make their attack upon, knowing that, once unsettled, it will rest no where, but go on from change to change until new manners and habits drive out the old. The swarming sectaries about us see our condition and make their profit of it. And so sedulously do they work in this so well prepared field, that they have converted much of our generous soil into what they call their holy lands, lands that will soon, as to vital Christianity, resemble those interminable wastes that, we are told, formerly bounded in, with a cruel pride, certain of the German states. "*Civitatibus maxima laus est quam latissimas circum se vastatis finibus solitudines habere.*"* Look to Wales, look to England, look to every part of the British empire, at home and abroad, and you will see

* Cæsar de Bell. Gall. Lib. 6. c. 22.

our indefatigable dissenting adversaries spreading about their pious fervours, and debauching all the staid religious notions of society, and implanting in their room the manners and prophaneness of Cromwell's age, together with that invincible self conceit for which there is no cure and against which there is no security. The vanity which these sectaries so foster is the fruitful parent of half our national crimes. Men are taught in their bedlam schools of dissent to judge in all religious matters for themselves, and these instructions they extend to judging for others too. They make creeds for their own and creeds for the common use, and their right to examine, which they do with a most coarse and fearless familiarity, "the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God," they second by a like fearless examination of the secrets of human government, not hesitating to condemn, in their hot and hasty and assured views, regulations of the most wholesome and laws of the most virtuous cast.* And I will leave it with even their consideration who do not trouble themselves to deliberate much upon any subjects, whether when contempt of government is once rooted in the ignorant mind, defiance of and disobedience to government will be far behind. Nothing can extort respect from those who are thus cherished in an idle vanity and a blind opinion of their own sufficiency. This is the

* Sir William Temple, in his "Observations upon the Netherlands," has a remark which fully acquaints us with his opinion as to the tendencies of a change in the religious feelings of the great body of a nation. "Whosoever designs the change of religion in a country, or government, by any other means than that of a general conversion of the people, or the greatest part of them, designs all the mischiefs to a nation that use to usher in or attend the two greatest distempers of the state, civil war, or tyranny; which are, violence, oppression, cruelty, rapine, intemperance, injustice, and, in short, the miserable effusion of human blood, and the confusion of all laws, orders, and virtues among men." P. 190.

secret charm by which the dissenters are daily effecting their conversions, thickening their ranks, magnifying their claims, and triumphing over the established laws and religion, and manners and habits of the people.*

Whoever will trouble himself to take a view of society as it spreads itself out hot and burning about him; whoever will have the courage to look our present danger full in the face, will find this to be, in a large measure, the source of it. A general conversion of the people to the principles of dissent; a

* Hear what a celebrated man of their party and principles thought (for though so delivered I take them as his sentiments) of this change in public opinion, which with such potency moves and governs all human affairs, in his time. "Now there has been a very sudden and a very sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years by the progress of learning and of liberty. Most people, in this island, have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: the clergy have much lost their credit: their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and even religion can scarce support itself in the world. The mere name of *king* commands little respect; and to talk of a king as GOD's vicegerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one. Though the crown, by means of its large revenue, may maintain its authority in times of tranquillity, upon private interest and influence; yet as the least shock or convulsion must break all these interests to pieces, the kingly power being no longer supported by the settled principles and opinions of men, will immediately dissolve. Had men been in the same disposition at the *revolution* as they are at present, monarchy would have run a great risque of being entirely lost in this island."—(Essays. Vol. 1. p. 47.) Had Mr. Hume lived in the present period, he would have found this picture, then only growing into a visible form and dimension, to have attained nearly its full stature. And if monarchy, with such opinions, would have run the risk of being set aside at the revolution, what is its fate likely to be now, when these opinions are all settling and fixing deep in the minds of the dissenting part (every day increasing) of our population, all systematized, and all ready to do their work upon the first regular approach of convulsion in the state? Surely this circumstance is worth our serious consideration.

general consequent alteration of their native principles, manners, and attachments, is the grand aim of the dissenting interest at this moment. They are striving to get numbers on their side; numbers to adopt their sentiments; numbers to follow up their views; numbers to only seem to do this, or to rest merely in neutrality; and when these are gained, (and every where we have proofs of their industry, and, in many places, of their success,) the struggle will be over; for then they will be the people of England, and, in conformity with their own doctrines, the making of the established church, of the established government, the established laws, usages and administrations of the realm, will all be in their hands. The Sovereignty of the people we are content, like idiots, to flourish about and toast at present. They will then take care to let us know what the Sovereignty of the people means.

Be assured, gentlemen, our situation is bad, bad every way. We are folding our arms and reposing upon the liberality of our adversaries when we should be arming us against their treachery. We have long enough rested in conjectures, in fond hopes, in favourable expectations, in a generous translation of the views of our dissenting and democratical brethren. The time is past for any more of this wretched trifling. What have we to do with conjectures about the future, when we see all that is present going wrong? Can we weakly waste time in prophesying the return of clearer skies and fairer weather when the clouds ride heavy and every thing is in commotion about us? Indeed I would not willingly overcharge the picture of our present condition, but we had better see it in the full and frightful form it is putting on than close our eyes and understandings, and fancy that there is nothing to be alarmed at. Wherever we turn we see an established religion, with no fault of its own, falling into decay. Much of

the form and little of the spirit of Christianity about us. No security that "to-morrow will be as this day," dull, and doubtful, and gloomy as it is. Government changing its measures as to the church; legislating one session in her favour and the next delivering her bound into the hands of the enemy. The nobility and gentry looking on with a passive indifference, and either, like Gallio, "caring for none of these things," or not sufficiently resenting, or in some instances even inconsiderately aiding those hostile machinations through which, under pious or constitutional forms, her downfall is to be effected; while a large portion of our landed proprietors, ever craving and never satisfied, are pouring out their contumelies upon the establishment, and by the slander of her ministers, paving the way, as they hope, to the diminution of her revenues. In the meanwhile, poisoned by a thousand arts and misrepresentations, little or no attachment towards their spiritual pastors is, in many parts, discernible in the body of their parishioners, but sectaries, permitted by the legislature to roam at pleasure through the land, are arming and crazing the common mind against us, and indisposing our congregations to benefit from our labours by frantic declamations, or deep and subtle reproaches. To fill up the measure of our misfortunes, the clergy themselves—thanks to the treachery of our evangelical Judases—are a divided body, with no dependence on each other for mutual support or strenuous exertion; but while the enemy are wasting them without, like the wretched inhabitants of Jerusalem, they are dying within of the unhappy wounds they inflict upon each other.

Will you say that you see nothing of all this in the present posture of our affairs, ecclesiastical and civil; that it is merely the distempered dream of a careful overcharged mind; the terrific figures in the evening clouds which this moment appal the eye,

and which the wrack dislimns for ever in the next? Be it so—and who said not thus in the days of the protectorate? And who thought not thus in the taxation of our American colonies? And who reasoned not thus in the late Irish rebellions? And who sagaciously divined not thus previously to the breaking out of the French revolution? Who, in short, in most of the dreadful changes that have taken place on the face of the earth, who treated not the idea of such changes with contempt, till the gigantic figures were fairly before him in their whole horrible dimensions, and crowns, and sceptres, and mitres, all cast and buried in the same ocean of blood?

Think not, gentlemen, we are in no danger because we see not its symptoms in every thing about us, and because dismay appears not on every countenance. He who recollects how little public, or private calamity has, at any time, been suffered to intrude upon public or private enjoyment, or even upon a common national lightness of manners, will not be forward to make an almost universal face of unconcern any argument against reasonable and great cause of alarm. “The report (says the historian*) of our defeat in Germany filled the city, yet afflicted it in no degree. Of our armies slaughtered, of the winter encampments of the legions taken and possessed by the enemy, of the revolt of all the nations of Gaul, people discoursed as matter of news only, not as calamities.” In virtuous periods policy might occasionally have advised this indifference, as it did probably in the instance of the public games suffering no suspension at Sparta on the news of the battle of Leuctra; but in ages of matured profligacy, where a devotedness to dissipation has corrupted all ranks and

* Tacitus, History, Book 4.

confounded all principles, nothing in the shape of alarm or danger is suffered to disturb their guilty revellings. Philip may invade Athens, but their theatres must continue open and the revenues of a province be paid for the exhibition of a play; he may threat their lives or their liberties, but they will have their pleasures in spite of him. Tarentum will indulge in her baths and her feastings, her garlands and her wine, though the enemy is thundering at her gates. A full blown rank luxuriousness will listen to no commutation with its appetites. Its couch must be spread amid gardens of paradise, while all the softness of Arabia breathes around, and music and dance and song, and the high wrought symphonies of nature, must still rule this hour, though fortune, portentous in her changes, dash the cup of intoxication from their lips the next; nor ever shall they arouse from their effeminate slumbers till the hand of death, cold and clammy, freezes up their souls in the very lap of their voluptuousness. O who would thus scatter roses over the ghastly remains of the field of Bedriacum! Who would thus, in the bowers of Aricinum, amid indulgence and sloth, learn the first tidings that our ecclesiastical constitution is departed from us, and our monarchical government at an end; that democracy is installed in all the honors of sovereignty, and sectarism seated on the smoking ruins of the church.

But we are assailed, it may be urged, by low and mean instruments. I know it; and we can hardly be assailed by worse. Low instruments are never to be despised. Low instruments are at the head of all public commotions. All remarkable revolutions have been executed by low instruments, seconded by a rightly prepared and seasoned population. For they are the first to give bold advice and to begin daring iniquities. And their example will have a mighty influence in such perilous situations, where all judg-

ments are almost equally snatched at and equally sanctified ; not what is most consonant with reason, but what is most assuredly delivered, and most moveth the common mind to the common desire, being of the more especial prevailment. Lord Bacon, with his usual sagacity, hath sufficiently, I think, accounted for this. “There is in human nature (he remarks) generally more of the fool, than of the wise ; and therefore those faculties, by which the foolish part of men’s minds is taken, are most potent. Wonderful like is the case of boldness in civil business : what first ? boldness ; what second and third ? boldness. And yet boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts. But nevertheless it doth fascinate, and bind hand and foot, those that are either shallow in judgment, or weak in courage, which are the greatest part ; yea, and prevaieth with wise men at weak times ; therefore we see it hath done wonders in popular states.”* It is surprising what these contemptible adversaries, as we are disposed to consider them, have done on the great theatre of life, and are capable of doing. With no learning, no religion, no patriotism, no feelings of their own but of the most vulgar description, yet do they possess an unlimited influence over the feelings of others. Tell me not that their understandings are poor, their opinions weak, their schemes wild, their language untutored, their eloquence coarse and disgusting. What does all this signify so long as they can carry the popular voice and will with them, the popular heart and affections ? Believe me, while they can manage this, they will suffer from the imputation of neither folly nor madness. That they are a scandal to any honest cause we know, but we know too that to the cause they espouse, and have undertaken to support, they are no scandal.

* Essay XII. Of boldness.

We do not fairly appreciate their powers, their weight in the scale of nations, when manners and morals have become all corrupted. Little base instruments outdo our fears in the calculation of politic consequences. Little circumstances exalt, destroy, root out the very memorials of long enduring magnificence. The common contingencies of society alter every thing about us. In arts, in arms, in sciences, base means exalt and degrade, and contemptible causes, running together, gather up important effects. When Paracelsus lead the way to the ridicule of the ancient physicians, fleeting and preposterous as was his own hypothesis, he yet poisoned the source of all valuable and correct practice for a long period afterwards. When Peter the hermit, in a fanatical moment preached the crusades, he threw the whole Christian world into confusion, and scattered blood and civilization in every region. When Theudas persuaded his countrymen, the Galileans, that they were the elect of God, and ought not therefore to submit to any ordinance of man, though he and his followers were almost instantly annihilated, yet the impression on the enthusiasm of the common mind remained, and in its eventual tendency involved both Jerusalem and her temple in destruction. If disdain of the instrument were a sufficient apology for disdain of the danger, there are few revolutions, political or ecclesiastical, that might not safely have been laughed to scorn. But when the most deplorable examples are before us of the greatest changes produced by the lowest means, we cannot surely behold unappalled the perpetual, and, what is more to be dreaded, the systematic working of such means among us at present.

I should be glad to know the use of years and experience if they do not lead us to wisdom. Has the page, "rich with the spoils of time," been unfolded in vain? All history calls out to us, with crowded column

upon column, to beware of these low instruments of rebellion. Greece, and Rome, and every empire that has existed, felt, in turn, that they never could be safe under such base influence.* In our own nation, as you are well aware, the strength of these obscure popular demagogues has been frequently and severely witnessed. Recollect we not an example of one of these dreadful scourges to society at an early period of our history; how the most shocking acts of violence were committed under the guidance and sanction of *Long-beard the lawyer*, and that not less than fifty thousand miscreants, who at that time infested the capital, followed in his train of pillage and assassination? And how potent was the authority of this demagogue orator of the people, and how highly he was thought of, is evident from the gibbet on which he was executed, and the very ground on which it was erected, being taken away and preserved by his deluded followers as sacred relics! Neither can we forget that it was a few bad men of this description that brought about all the horrors of the reign of Charles I. a few popular republican and fanatic characters (not much unlike those who are corrupting, and courting, and toasting the Sovereignty of the people at present) that harrowed up the public soul, and rested not from their

* Plutarch, in his Life of Cæsar, speaking of the remissness manifested at Rome as to the popularity of that extraordinary man, justly remarks, that “when it was grown to such a height that it was scarce possible to demolish it, and had a plain tendency to the ruin of the constitution, they found out, when it was too late, that no beginnings of things, however small, are to be neglected, because continuance makes them great; and the very contempt they are held in gives them opportunity to gain that strength which cannot be resisted.” I wish we could be persuaded to make a wise use of this reflection, and not suffer so many encroachments upon our established laws and constitution, under the notion that the deviation itself, or the authors of it, are too contemptible to create alarm.

sacrilegious labours until "the land was desolate" and "the sanctuary in ruins." Shall we, gentlemen, by our indifference, our incredulity, our ill-timed contempt of these despicable instruments of revolution, suffer *modern Longbeards* to rise up among us, and brave us upon every public occasion with their insolent speeches, and take the hearts of our people and turn them to bitterness and gall against their rulers? Shall we countenance the whole brood of dissent and disaffection, and nurse them up by our supineness for a second miserable overthrow of monarchical and episcopal government? We have no intention of doing this—but be assured we cannot avoid doing it, if we consent silently to gaze upon those scenes passing before us, which the sun sickens at the very sight of.

How indeed to characterize such a heterogeneous phalanx of opposition as now every where prevails against government, I know not. It is no opposition that can be bound up and described under one name, or one nature. It is a mixture of all colours and all casts; working by all known and all unknown mechanisms; combining with every thing that is ridiculous and dirty in expedient, every thing that is dark in intention and dreadful in operation. This army of aliens fight under no general. They are led on by existing circumstances, and will desert their ranks the moment they can secure their spoil. If they can overturn the constitution and make a comedy of it, can ruin the state and laugh at us, they will; but if we are not to be wheedled and fooled out of our possessions, they will prepare as deep a tragedy for us as ever Goth or Vandal did in the sack of ancient empire. Or tragedy or comedy, they will carry their point, if the public feeling will permit them.

As the world grows older it grows wiser, and in part it grows baser too. We might almost be justified in the Pythagorean superstition, that our offences, like our souls, suffer a sort of transmigration, and that

what we attack under one form in the present age is only the ghost of crime that had its body of existence centuries back, and that has never effectually been laid from that time to this. A perpetual flame seems to be kept up more sacredly than the very Vestal fires of all the crafts and seductions and villainies of man's nature, by which society in every stage, and government in every form, and the world in every period, have been made to tremble and to suffer. As connected in some measure with this opinion, I have always considered both the rise and fall of seditions and heresies in a state as materials laid up for its future destruction. The heresy comes, and it goes, and we think no more of it. But be assured, gentlemen, nothing is lost; nothing runs to waste of all these collections of sedition from age to age. One generation after another works them into form, and gives them more durable consistencies. Their first originaters and fomenters are indeed gone, but they have left these relics of their souls behind them, to contaminate the peace of the world which they can no longer disturb. What did Rome lose of her seditions from the moment she abolished her kingly power and created her consuls? Where did her tribunes stop in their exactions upon the Patrician authority? When did they ever part with aught which they had gained by their popular clamours? Was there among them any instance of an age uninjured by former periods of sedition, and beginning in a native purity afresh? Did not these seditions roll on from father to son, constantly congregating and enlarging as they proceeded, and thus one age become the tutor in disaffection to another? Did not the Gracchi follow upon the track that the *Dominatio Plebis* had marked out, and were not their warm hasty steps pursued by abler, artfuller, more determined and abandoned demagogues, who, working upon minds so previously and so abundantly prepared, added to their lesser crimes

far greater darings, and finished the reformation by the subjugation of the common wealth and the proscription of all that stood, or was even suspected to stand in the way of their ambition? And who will say, (unless God has given to man since these periods of infamy a new nature) who will say that our former seditions are not at the root of our present; that the ashes of Cromwell's age are not glowing in our own; that the rancour of dissent in that gloomy period is not brief in this, and that the French revolution is not throughout Europe ready to start to a second life, and to begin its horrors and confiscations afresh?

Of demoralizing principles, religious or political, in all their stages, there is, I think, hardly any obliteration, especially if the taint has been early received or in bad times. Will any one assert that the effects of Pain's writings, which were with so much difficulty suppressed, are even yet faded from men's minds, and have ceased to contaminate society; that the tendency of Wilke's seditious conduct and speeches, or of the elegant inflammatory letters of Junius, are no longer injurious; or that the writers who so dreadfully unhinged the obedience of the subject in those days, have not thereby assisted, and very mainly, in unsettling the peace and corrupting the principles of posterity? Will any man seriously declare that the bold and coarse publications from the press, that then swarmed over the country, have had their hour, and have all disappeared and died with their incendiary authors; or that the effect of the writings, as bold and as coarse, and to the full as licentious, of the demagogues of our day, the Cobbets, the Woolers, and a long list of inferior artists, will exist no longer than the popularity of these men is in existence? Alas! the process does not expire with the popularity. They have poured the poison into the veins, and it will flow through the blood of unborn generations. It will riot in the constitution till the whole body

politic shall become a mere lazar house from which every healthy mind will be compelled to flee with loathing. Well may we pronounce a woe unto such men that nourish in their hearts such offences; for the seditious and mutinous spirit thus taught to frail suffering humanity is but too frequently a companion on their bed of death, and carried with them to their desolate and despairing graves!

And if our political offences thus go on from age to age without dying as to their effects, so I conceive do our heretical errors also. Will it be said that some laxity in our religious notions, some confusion in our religious doctrines, some difference in our religious creeds and formularies is unavoidable; that heresies ever have and ever must prevail in the Christian world, but that in the meanwhile the word of the Lord endureth? True—the exorcisms of Magus, the incantations of Menander, the impieties of Saturninus, the darker prophaneness of Basilides, the horrid practices of the Nicolaitans, together with the proud pretensions of the Gnostics, are all passed away, while the scriptures of the everlasting Jehovah remain. But be it recollected, that they remain a proof at once of the wickedness of man and of the mercy of God; that while sects appear and disappear; creeds spring up and vanish, ancient defilements melt into modern blasphemies, and the absurdities of one age give place to the profanations of another, Christianity all the time lies bleeding; and that if these fleeting violations are perpetually crossing its disc, the “Sun of righteousness” must of necessity be obscured, and pure, vital, practical religion forgotten; that religion which alone can “bind the unruly wills and affections of sinful men,” and make society tolerable while we are constrained to remain in it. What but the heresies of Christianity have obstructed the progress of Christianity? What but our controversial has murdered our practical divinity; and where are the advantages

to compensate for this evident, perpetual, and perpetually increasing disadvantage? But if seditions and heresies never die, and how should they when they spawn from age to age with added filth and rankness, they must always be in operation, and always minister to the danger of a nation in distorted and troublesome times.

Look, gentlemen, as a further demonstration of this danger, look to the present situation of other kingdoms in Europe as well as of our own, and you will see what a melancholy fellowship and resemblance subsists between us. There is every where abroad something like a general, undefined expectation of fearful changes. It is indeed a half-confessed, smothered feeling; a feeling which the mind is unwilling to entertain, and would be glad to get rid of if it knew how. We dread to cope with, and are therefore unwilling to look upon, or to believe in the coming storm. Yet the "signs of the times" are too evident to be misunderstood, and too prophetic of our peril to be slighted. The sky is changing, and the air is changing, and the stars are dimly seen in the heavens.

*Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes,
Ingens.*

There is altogether a dead colouring of the creation closing in and thickening about us; a deep and awful gloom which conceals we know not what of portentous appearances that the eye would gladly turn from, though the fancy were only to feign them. Our worst men are high in hope. Our best men are cast down with fears. Our wisest men, out of heart and drooping in their counsels, are coasting on the edge of despondency. In the mean while, with an almost total uncontrol, the flood gates of licentiousness are thrown wide open, and from a thousand heights the torrent pours headlong, foaming, thundering, tearing up all in its course from one state, one kingdom, one end of the earth even unto the other.

These prophesies there will, I fear, be no occasion to wait long for the completion of, in whole or in part. Partially indeed they are rapidly hastening upon us already. Even, gentlemen, in a superficial, general point of view, I do not think our present condition very much unlike that of France immediately precedent to her revolution. We are at this moment, I need not say, not a fallen empire. We are not even descending from the giddy glorious hight that has ranked us among the first of nations. We have no assured symptoms of decline about us; none that the common gaze can discover, from either the extensiveness of our dominions, the progressive increase of our commerce and our crimes, our deleterious luxury, or even our immense expenditure. Outwardly our figure is still imposing, still commanding. We preserve to the eye of foreign states our invincible courage, our generous deportment, our staid, and pondered and unfluctuating counsels. In our external relations we fear nothing. We have nothing to fear. All are our friends, and no power of Europe has a thought of interrupting our peace. There is indeed envy abroad, but admiration is abroad also. Gratitude is abroad, and nations will not soon forget the arm that, under Providence, has rescued and brought them out of darkness into a "marvellous light." The executive, it must be confessed, is invested with large powers, but there is a modest exertion of them. The laws of the realm (whatever may be, in some instances, their impolicy) are by no means strictly enforced. We have a mild sovereign, a mild administration, an impartial, humane, conciliating, conceding government throughout.

Now this, so far as dissimilar objects will admit of comparison, was, I think, at the period I allude to, very much the situation of France. Recal her proud circumstances previously to her revolution, and I feel assured, gentlemen, that you will herein in good

measure agree with me. What monarchy more externally powerful, more externally splendid, more seemingly calculated to bid defiance to the philosophical atheism, the religious indifference and infidelity, the democratical principles, the dark, murderous machinations by which, suffocated in blood, she was so soon to be tumbled from her airy heights? What foreign enemies had she at that period to contend with; what foreign jealousies; what foreign sources of uneasiness or alarm? Did not she stand in the most commanding attitude, even almost to her giving the law to Europe? She cast her eye in every quarter, and in every quarter there was submission and peace. Her population was extensive, her commerce flourishing, her manufactures not decaying, nor was even her wealth mean. She looked upon the fair form and face of her dominions, and felt her greatness and ruled her subjects with lenity. Alas! how poorly do the largest capacities judge;* how late behold the vengeance suspended but by a single hair! It was *at home* that the danger menaced this "Great Babylon;" at home that the ruin lurked. It was

* "Though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, *that they are a government of laws, not of men*. They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprizing degree. Property is there secure, industry encouraged, the arts flourish, and the prince lives secure among his subjects like a father among his children." Hume's Essays. Vol. 1. p. 103.—When the infidel historian thus expressed himself, how little did he apprehend that, to the disgrace of his sagacity, fifty years would not elapse before the mildest monarch that ever sat on the throne of France would be cast to the ground, and the dynasty of the Bourbons perish! In fact, at the time Hume made this remark, he was himself among the number of those that were preparing the public mind for this dreadful catastrophe. Almost every page in the writings of this celebrated author is a page of deep and fixed corruption.

from her own bowels that she was preparing her own poison ; from her own dissolute, debauched, perfidious philosophically infidel children that her unextinguishable destruction was to ensue ! All her consummation of misery was to spring from her own loins ! To the common gaze her foundations were strong. Ages had passed away and there was no shaking of her walls or buttresses ; none that her rule of despotism could not awe, or the lenity of its exercise assuage. But still, the worm had got to the heart. The work of revolution was stealing on and giving no note of preparation. They heard it not rolling in terror through their provinces and cities, and alarming the public tranquillity, and arousing the public consternation with its prophetic yells. It was buried in silence. It was chained down to its burning lake, till the fiend was ready to "rear from off the pool his mighty stature," and, joined on signal by every reprobate rebellious spirit, to upsend "a shout that tore hell's concave." Then began the confusion. Then commenced the confiscation. Then, as in the fields of Ilion, mortals and immortals were discovered mixing in the carnage. Then were seen the spirits of Voltaire, Rosseau, Helvetius, bursting their cearments; and, covered with the ashes of their earthly crimes, leading on their votaries with "garments rolled in blood" through frenzy, through despair, through blasphemy that taught them to "curse God and die," to every enormity that our lost human nature is capable of, and that she afterwards shudders and shrinks within herself to think that she should be capable of. Here "the last state" of no man was "worse than the first;" for all became alike red with slaughter, hardened in guilt, and lost to penitence !

This mighty ocean of crime, and I am sure no one can be surprized at it, has not yet subsided. The polluted streams have not found their way back to that dark world of waters from whence they issued.

Look, gentlemen, to what is even now passing in that unhappy and far from enviable empire. Are not the "ultras" there as loud in their denunciation of the present order of things as the democrats are here? Is not their administration weak, unconfirmed, constantly abused, and their King constantly threatened? Is he not, mild and generous as he has shewn himself, still treated by the great body of the disaffected among them (shamefully countenanced by their Whig applauders among ourselves) as an usurper, and is not the virulence of their censure commensurate with the treason of their opinion? Where do we find in France any thing like a chastised obedience to their lawful sovereign; and were an aspiring mind to spring up among them, would not all who are thus constrained in their submission instantly flock to his standard? The agitations at Nismes a little time back tell us their revolutionary spirit is not dead. The annihilation of shame in the opposers of the French government is a fearful mark of the same spirit. The debate in the French chamber of deputies on the petitions for recalling the whole body of exiles, without distinction of classes, traitors, regicides and all, plainly evince the perturbed feelings that yet distract that unfortunate country, and give us little hope of rest from national convulsions, so far as the authority and example of France, still bent on change, may have power to continue them.

Nor are the other states of Europe much more quiet. In Spain, so far as things are suffered to transpire, it is a scene of discordance throughout. In Prussia and the Netherlands the people are looking for more freedom than their sovereigns think it safe or politic to allow them. In Germany almost every circle is learning a lesson of rebellion from the book of revolution. In Italy, the hot-bed of intrigue, their states are by no means settled down in their several dependencies to a permanent contentment. In Swe-

den, with a prince sprung from the germ of revolution, it is unlikely that discordancies should not by and bye come upon them; and even in our own American possessions we see that Canada is not entirely untouched by the prevailing epidemic of the times, nor, if America can assist directly or indirectly in the process of disaffection, may she be long before she is instigated to find or to fancy a cause for separating herself, with a like treacherous ingratitude, from her parent country.

And when to this universal disposition to political change in every country we add the progressive attendant movements of a religious cast; when we consider that various denominations of sectaries are overrunning the Christian world, and are in every nation, as well as in England, separating large masses of the people from their established formularies, and fanaticizing as fast as they separate them, we shall have but too secure a foundation for every alarm under which the monarchical kingdoms of Europe are at present labouring. Where do we find a disturbed state of affairs abroad, any more than at home, where a fanatical population is not at the root of it? What part of the Continent is free from this scourge? and wherever the principles of dissent are suffered to flow loose upon society, we can defend neither an established church nor an established throne against their prevailment. For every thing they will root up that stands in their way, as all antiquated institutions do; and, alas! will root up, under the opinion of "doing God service." Look to the Calvinists, to the Socinians, to the various tribes of Methodists, that hang like a cloud of locusts over every Protestant kingdom; look to and probe their doctrines, all bottomed upon some peculiar pervading fanaticism, and see if they do not go to the eradicating of obedience and the subversion of government, not only by deracinating every kind of belief which Christianity hath taught us

to hold in reverence, but every law, and usage, and source of common authority and mutual regard, which such belief implies and creates. What the ultras of France, the sectaries of England, the fanatics of Germany, or the carbonari of Italy may intend, or may be able eventually to accomplish, we know not; but certainly, with all the ties of religion frittered, and deranged, and hanging like shreds about them, and the very bible appealed to as an apology for their blasphemies, they are well prepared for rebellion, poison, assassination, or any other crime they may fetch out of their creeds that may best comport with existing views or circumstances. "*The death blow of Augustus de Kotzebue, in the name of virtue,*" seals, in every part of Europe, the fate of as many and as illustrious victims as fanaticism may be pleased to judge necessary for the renovation of an enslaved world; seals their fate, and sanctifies the deed when it is done!*

* Though we hardly know what is and what is not accurate information, yet having only the public prints to direct us, we must select as well as we can. The following article of foreign intelligence from the French papers, dated Carlsruhe, July 14, (Evening Mail, July 23,) is important, if correct, and is much more likely to be correct than not. "It appears daily more and more evident from the proceedings instituted at Manheim against the assassin of M. Kotzebue, that what the friends of good principles and the country have dreaded is but too true, and that Sandt has had accomplices. M. de Flohen Horel, who has the direction of this procedure, has, as we are assured from good authority, discovered the traces of a conspiracy which extends through all Germany, and probably even farther. The principles of this conspiracy are equally revolutionary in religion and in politics. It aims at amalgamating all the different faiths in Germany into one religion, which shall recognize no other authority than the bible, and no duty or moral principle but what is the result of self-conviction. The chief political end of this conspiracy is the unity of Germany; to effect which all the existing governments are to be overturned, and a general assembly convoked in the centre of Germany, under the name of a Senate, which shall elect a Prince for the whole

It is this fanatic notion of independence, mixt with and binding up every sort of political delinquency, that is in all governments so dangerous. Wherever it prevails, a nation must be liable to constant and great convulsions. It either produces or facilitates the derangement of all established order. Drawn out into, and making a part of the principles of education (and rarely is it neglected to be so employed), it produces stern, determined, fiery characters, putting their heart into every act, whether reason or virtue calleth for it or no. It is this spirit that worked to the ruin of many states in the history of modern times, and that is working in Europe now; this spirit that, in conjunction with infidelity, overthrew France before, and unaided by infidelity, and by its own sole contaminating power, destroyed England in the time of the commonwealth. Yes—ever since the reformation a convulsionary movement hath been abroad. It is natural. When the established religion of a state, reformed from its pristine gross impurities, is suffered to be unhinged by every secession from it, what less can be expected? Every such secession

German nation." I have always thought that the "*British and Foreign Bible Society*" (almost entirely under the guidance of political dissenters, whatever may be the plausible appearance of regulations to the contrary) had other ends in view than the mere dispersion of the scriptures. I, for my own part, believe that they have much to answer for, for the fanaticism, and I need not add the disaffection they have long been the means of spreading abroad on the Continent, as well as in their own country. It will by and bye be seen what this great Babel, with all its pernicious auxiliary societies, are really driving at. They are increasing, not in pure religious influence, for they never possessed any, but in political revolutionary influence wherever they are suffered to establish themselves. To Bishop Marsh, Archdeacon Daubeny, Mr. Norris, and other able advocates against them, the established government and religion owe more obligations than they will ever be able to pay. To Dr. Maltby, "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike," they, in this respect, owe no obligations at all.

weakens, throws doubt upon, debases it. Where this is the case, it is hardly possible, our natural corruptions considered and our acquired taints, to keep a nation from perpetual change, and there is no change not decidedly for the better, but, judging from the common course of experience, will be manifestly much for the worse.

Be assured, gentlemen, revolution is asleep in no one nation upon the Continent, though her stores are perhaps preparing upon a more systematized scale in our own country. What can we think of the state of public opinion among us, when even Sir Francis Burdett is denounced by the more thorough-paced reformers as deserting the cause of the friends of liberty, and when every public meeting to alleviate the distress is only used as a handle to inflame the passions of the people? Well might our puissant orators, on certain late local occasions, in congratulating the electors upon their success, well might they feel themselves secure in declaring that their principles would "hurl a Castlereagh and a Canning from their seats,"* and "their victory in Norwich, and those of their friends in other places, would make Downing-street tremble,"†

* Norwich Mercury, Oct. 31, 1818.

† See this gentleman's addresses to the populace during the late elections, as detailed in the Norwich Mercury and Norfolk Chronicle. Mr. Edward Taylor, who is a Goliath of Gath, in Norwich, would, I think, become dwarfish in his dimensions any where else. Such Pockthorpe orators are formidable characters only when the times are formidable. It is, if I mistake not, one of the maxims of Machiavel, "that a disaffected citizen can do no material harm but in a disaffected city." Take these men and place them under a quiet, loyal state of the public mind, and see how speedily they would sink into a deplorable neglect and contempt. If Mr. Taylor means well (and I will not positively say, much as appearances are against them, that he or his worthy colleague mean otherwise), he takes a most unhappy method of evincing his love to his country; for we scruple not to book him with Mr. Coke, (and, politically, we can hardly give him a worse

Yes—and Mr. Edward Taylor, and his com-patriot of Yarmouth, in the pride of their prophetic powers, might have added, though, by the bye, while making these mighty threats, I wonder they were not a little startled at their own insignificancy, that it was such *blue and white* principles and proceedings as these; such mischievous, contriving demagogues as themselves, bating that Gallic blackness of heart which I hope, nurtured in an English soil, they are yet free from; such instigators of the public feeling, upon every occasion, against the public authority, that in the French revolution made the Bastile to tremble, and that seconded that tremendous blow by making the clergy to tremble at their altars, and the king to tremble on his throne, and the great men to tremble in their palaces, and the poor to tremble in their cottages, and that at length compleated the work of devastation, by crowding into one common charnel, kings, princes, nobles, clergy, and (to finish this “dance of death”) by giving up to proscription the very wretches through whose assistance all this black catalogue of nameless, reckless crime was effected. Make Downing-street tremble indeed! Let such mob orators condense their plans and plots of reform, and we shall presently find the English constitution, like the French monarchy, a clay-cold corpse, cast into the common sewers. Nor parliaments septennial, triennial, or annual, shall we want; nor suffrage partial or universal. Give the democratic spirit line, and it will save you the trouble of reform in either church or state. You will have but one want, a passage to Canada or the wilds of Siberia, with what part of your families you can preserve from the com-

companion), who upon all occasions seems to delight in inflaming those minds he ought rather to soften, in perturbed seasons, to a peaceful, patient acquiescence.

mon wreck. Your fortunes they will take care of for you before you set sail.*

But perhaps in consonance with the opinion of those who fancy we are in no danger, it may be thought better to wait awhile and see what course the disaffected spirit will take, how it may be disposed to concoct its venom, in what form of terror it may chuse to come forth, embody itself, and meet us. This is not, gentlemen, the language of reason, nor is it the suggestion of patriotism. It is the juggling art of the very men who have implicated themselves, soul and body, in this conspiracy against the liberties and happiness of their country. What is this but to gain time for the operation of their principles among poor and ignorant minds who are the first to be caught by the seducement, and are willing to fancy that the eternal designs of Providence can be overruled in their favour, and the doom of the Deity obliterated by the fiat of the demagogue. When Pain published his "Rights of Man," what was an almost immediate consequence of it in this kingdom? An unbounded increase of debating societies and clubs under various denominations, and an increase as unbounded in the boldness and badness of their political feelings. When he afterwards sent forth his "Age of Reason," to what propensities did it give birth? How did it operate upon the religion,

* It were to be wished that our great Whig leader of the county would consult his reputation, by separating himself from certain of his democratic friends, who, I understand, before they were discovered hugging and paying their addresses to the same popular idol, were among the number of his open enemies; men that pamper up his vanity, and eat and drink and live upon his weakness. He would do well, as a talisman against their designs, to bear in memory the paradoxical instructions of the Delphic oracle: "Look into yourself, discover yourself, keep close to yourself, call back your mind and will, that elsewhere consume themselves, into yourself.—Men betray you, men steal you from yourself."

manners, morals of society? It became the signal of recusancy, civil and ecclesiastical. It crowned a total fearlessness towards man with a total defiance of God. It set every one free to follow his own inventions, to execute his iniquities upon as large and frightful a scale as he could here, with the consolation of covering up all enormity by certain annihilation hereafter.

Now will our adversaries say, that in these instances, and many more of a similar nature that could be adduced, government had no right to interfere; that they had no right to arraign the designs, or to prosecute the principles of such publications, or the actions that might eventually flow from the spirit with which they were imbibed? Will they say that our rulers should rather have rested on their counsels until these designs were more apparent, more tangible by the overt act; until these incendiaries had put on the red cap, and planted the tree of liberty, and introduced the guillotine, and by the operation of that single instrument superseded the necessity of judge, or jury, or constitution, or laws? Recollect, gentlemen, how hard it was to persuade the public voice that there was any danger, in the year 1793, in the associations in this kingdom (a consequence of Pain's principles) of reformers and levellers. Even the great talents of Mr. Fox were employed in ridiculing all ideas of apprehension, and I can remember that I was myself, then at an early untried period, borne away by the flame of his eloquence and the apparent cogency of his arguments, and was but slowly able to recover myself and entirely to shake off the seducement. But is any one now prepared to say, calmly looking back upon the state of affairs as they have rolled on from that time to the present, that if a general counter-association had not been formed in this kingdom for the support of regulated liberty and

property, either property or liberty would have been of long continuance?

If then such be the current and tide of popular disaffection in this kingdom and in the world at large—if sedition is working every way among us, and dissent, a first mainspring, is every way and every where increasing it, let us confess the existence of a danger which we can by no incredulity elude, and of a danger mighty, and magnifying and extending itself in all directions. Every man indeed naturally gives into the opinion that his own town, or city, or county; the people among whom he lives, and whom he best knows, and whose daily and hourly machinations he witnesses, are, when adverse to the state, the most adverse. The supposition, gentlemen, is, I repeat, natural. It is what the unpractised mind will feel disposed to entertain, and will mercifully hope that it entertaineth justly. Still it is an erroneous supposition, and proves nothing more, I fear, in the present instance, than that all places where dissent and democracy abound are nearly bad alike. The railers against government at Norwich, are, (that we may come as near home as possible) believe me, neither deeper nor louder than those of the same disaffected cast elsewhere, though seeing and hearing and knowing more of them, we suspect them to be so. As the fire of Ida that announced the fall of Ilium, blazing through the still and solemn night, threw its gleams successively on the sacred top of Athos, on the waves of the Hellespont, on the head of Macetas, on the straits of Euripus, on the guarded declivities of Mesapius, on Cithæron, Gorgopis, Ægiplanctus, Prone; till crowning, finally, the heights of Arachne, it looked down on the royal state of Argos and entered the very palace of the unfortunate monarch—* so rolls the seditious spirit on from county

* Æschylus. Agamemnon.

to county, from city to city, from house to house, throughout England; from one colony to another, one kingdom to another, one continent to another, until the whole civilized world is becoming a continuous scene of disloyalty, and "all nations, people, and languages," are enlightened and alarmed by the glaring flame.

In this state of affairs, gentlemen, foreign and domestic, and I feel convinced that it is not exaggerated, but that every newspaper and every day's experience will but too mournfully bear me out in it, what are we to do? How are we to demean ourselves? Are we to sit still and let this disaffected spirit operate in the heart of society at its leisure? Are we to hear all this inflammatory language against a government which the great body of our people hold to be excellent, and not endeavour to rebut it? Are we to suffer the decent, serious part of the inhabitants of this country to be so deluded, the mass of its ordinary population so poisoned, the common mind, rash but not disloyal, so wrought up to despair and frenzy, and not speak of such traitors to the peace and honour and happiness of their country in the terms they deserve? What, shall they dare to attack all the constituted authorities of the realm, and pour forth, in whatever coarse and hardened terms they please, their denunciations of church and state, and shall we timidly submit to it, and in dastardly apprehensions for our own little domestic security forget the lofty duties we owe to the best country and the best constitution at this day in the civilized world? I know of no law that either God, or conscience, or human legislature has promulgated, to let one man's tongue go loose and to restrain another's. If our adversaries be not afraid of uttering their defamations, why should we be alarmed at publishing our vindications of government? If they lack not virulence in a bad cause, why should we lack honesty

and firmness in a good one? Is all the freedom of speech and liberty of sentiment on their side and none of it on ours? Must Satan vaunt aloud his revolting and blasphemous threats and suffer no rebuke from the fidelity of Abdiel? Are these miscreants to run up and down and pour fire into the yet green and smarting wounds of their country, and no one attempt to mollify and bind them up? Are they, infuriated, to "cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war," and shall we stand foolishly gazing upon their villanies, or disgracefully trembling at their threats, or, against all experience, credulously believing that things will take a better turn; against all hope, fancying that these deeply implicated demagogues will see their error and repent them of their crimes? What then, I repeat, shall we do? What can we, what ought we to desire to do but to touch the solemn chord of our duty at once, and discarding all minor differences, all differences that go not to the actually separating the political soul from the body, with one heart and one voice, in every town, city, county, in the realm, raise the proud standard of the British constitution, and with a resolution that shall appal the whole host of its infidel and abandoned adversaries, rally round our venerable establishment in church and state. Here let us fix our foot. Here let us stand in an attitude that shall tell the world we have nothing to hope but from our own spirited and united exertions, nothing to fear but from a want of that union and spirit. On this altar let us sacrifice our dissensions, and consecrate our holy vows, our gratitude, our love. Many and forcible are the reasons for such a line of conduct; many and forcible the claims which our beloved country thus threatened, thus oppressed, deluded, contaminated, has upon us.

There is indeed ever much apology for warm feelings in favour of an established government, but often

very little for such feelings against it. Men in the former case are bold, because they hope their cause is good, and because they know that few changes not deliberately undertaken are for the better. In the latter case, all that ought to be ventured upon is a chastised opposition, inasmuch as that government which they are denouncing as the bane may prove the salvation of the country, and, loaded with present reprobation, may intitle itself to the praise of those who come after us. There is something in an established order of things that invests it with solemnity. That which hath been long approved, it is fair to presume, hath something about it deserving of approval. That which our ancestors formed by their wisdom, and which their posterity have preserved by their valour; that which, as ages have come and gone, has been constantly receiving some accessions of strength in one reign, some softenings of discretion in another, some firmler defined principles in a third; that which hath grown up with us from our cradles, and which our reason hath demonstrated to be equitable and our experience hath found to be useful, will not readily suffer the touch of rash and raw legislators. We willingly change little in a form of government which we have found productive of prosperity; in a government sanctified by past generations, nothing. No empire is so glorious but years render it more so. It has passed a severe but honourable ordeal, and ought not to be exposed to commonplace accusations and an ignorant reproach.

It is so desirable to live under an established order of things; to be secure in our possessions and our reasonable calculations upon such comforts of life as attach to virtuous conduct in our respective stations, that I do not wonder at the slowness of every nation to disturb a present order of things. The sentiments given by the historian to Marcellus, though proceeding from an ill man, are yet founded in a solid judg-

ment. “ *Se meminisse temporum, quibus natus sit, quam civitatis formam patres ævique instituerint : ulteriora mirari, præ sentia sequi : bonos Imperatores voto expetere, quales cumque tolerare.*” * How often have usurpations been acquiesced in on the ground of the impolicy of unsettling the general tranquility, the piercing regrets at shedding one torrent of blood after another, and all merely to gratify the worst passions of the worst part of our species. A deference to established custom and usage we defend upon a like principle, and so naturally do we hold every thing venerable that is consecrated by years, that sooner than overturn their authority we occasionally disclaim even decided improvements upon them. The laws of all nations breathe of obedience to “ the powers that be.” Their happiness demands it. The cry for liberty, on the contrary, and reform, is generally a cry for confusion ; a dangerous propensity in virtuous minds ; in minds not virtuous a destructive one. All usurpations have not ended in internal disquiet. Almost all revolutions have, because almost all of them have sprung from ambitious and not from patriotic motives.

When Rome fell by the irruptions of the northern hordes, those wild powers came free to her carnage, and remained free when she was no more. With all their fierceness, and natural rights, and proud independence about them, they settled in the various provinces of that unhappy empire, and wherever they grounded their foot fixt the stamp of their own laws and constitution. Nor, though sufficiently barbarous, were these laws without gleams of virtue, and such capacities of improvement carried they about them as to have become the rude transcript of European governments in their present civilized form. As

* Tacitus.

far, and as nearly as we can gather at this distance of time, their institutions were of a mixt monarchical complexion. All had their powers, aristocratical, popular, and ecclesiastical. All had their leaders, in whom a sort of sovereign authority was vested, and apparently hereditarily vested, though not so intimately as not upon occasion to be transferred to other lines and other persons nowise related. With his wants, his passions, his propensities about him, the dignity of his nature and the feelings of his mind, they clearly saw that man was not cut out to endure either a purely despotic, or a purely popular government. But time that dreadfully changes all that mortality has any thing to do with, soon broke in upon the manners of these rude conquerors; for, palled with the fruits of victory, and steeping and stupifying their rough spirits in effeminacy, they perceived their souls dead to the call of glory, and too late discovered that freedom, ashamed of their supineness and disgusted with their degeneracy, had departed to other climes, and bestowed her blessings upon other people.

From this bed of rough liberty much of our own liberty hath probably arisen, and a large part of its original virtue must necessarily be left us so long as we continue a nation of any figure. As time rolls back the tide of history, I hardly know where we can stop for the founts of this great blessing; not probably before the Saxon æra. Whether we should be justified in any remoter pursuit of it, I dare not say, nor can I tell what spirit it was that, working upon those rough materials, solidly compacted from age to age, successively dictated the legislative enactments of Alfred, the laws of Edward the Confessor, the confirmation of those laws at the Conquest, the magna charta of John, the various recognitions and concessions, voluntary or extorted, throughout the Norman and Plantagenet lines, and the high and solemn deification of all these several extensions of

public freedom, by, in particular, our bill of rights and our act of settlement at, as we justly term it, the glorious epoch of the revolution of 1688. I repeat, gentlemen, I know not what spirit hath dictated all this; but it has given to Englishmen that proud pre-eminence in the security of their lives, their liberty, and their property, which no other nation on the face of the earth can or ever did boast of. Time may indeed have changed some of its directions, and circumstances have diminished some of its intendments; but the features that mark it out for what it is remain, the lines run on and throw its beauties into a softer mould, without impairing its steadiness. While reigning in the hearts of the people, such a constitution will buffet with the elements and feel the blasts of the desert pass harmless over it.

Our eyrie buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.*

But then Englishmen must shew themselves worthy of this blessing. They must shew that they are made great and honourable, and full of a proper spirit and dignity by these great and honourable distinctions. They must prove that while they largely partake, they understand the nature of this noble gift; that it is good so long as they are good; that it secures their lives so long as those lives are spent virtuously; that it preserves their liberties so long as those liberties flow in a manly regulated channel; that it insures their property so long as it is capable of being insured by the peaceable administration of just and equal laws. But the moment the heart and soul of the people of England become changed, all their charters, and rights, and recognitions, sink into a dead letter. From the English blood and spirit the constitution of England arose, and that blood, debased by sectarianism and de-

* Shakespear's Richard III.

mocracy, it gathers up its fame of days, and, working its own shroud, indignantly buries itself from the insult of such pollution.

It is miserable to see such a constitution threatened by such people. Really, gentlemen, the trim and cast of many of our modern reformers, and their mental preparation for the great works they are contemplating is ridiculous in the extreme. Some fitness it would be supposed there should be in every person who affects to be called to pass his judgment upon the established laws, the decorous institutions and usages of his country. What, do we soberly and gradually admit improvements in our arts and sciences, our agriculture, our trades, our manufactures, our little domestic arrangements, and ponder "frequent and full" before we dare venture to consider and introduce them as improvements, and shall the mighty foundations of our polity and piety be uncovered at once to every unholy eye; be disjointed piecemeal, and examined and pronounced as refuse by every bungling workman that has not so much as been taught the name of his reforming tools? Shall we believe such artists, deficient in every thing but self sufficiency, competent to the task of searching into the arcana of government, civil and religious, and of determining intuitively in those matters which a wise and solemn antiquity took age after age in building up and strengthening, till they made our monarchy what it is, and, for more permanent security, and fuller glory, and faithfuller attachment, connected it, and felt ennobled by the alliance, with our venerable and truly apostolic ecclesiastical establishment?—Yet is such, (posterity will hardly be brought to credit it) precisely the state of popular reform in this kingdom at the present moment. Consummate impudence and ignorance, and a stupid desperation make up the stock in trade of these itinerant state jugglers, these renovators of a consti-

tution of which they discern neither the origin nor end, nor know nor care how it was born, or by what means it may die, provided it does but die soon enough, and they can follow its funeral.

Our established church, gentlemen, is a part, a prime part of our established monarchy; is such a part, that its union with the state is the preservation, as its disseverance therefrom would go near to be the destruction of the empire. I think history, both civil and ecclesiastical, will bear us out in this opinion. Our personal experience will do the same, and our reason will come in aid of our experience. It is incumbent upon us, it is a duty we owe to our families and our country to remember, that all the great doctrines of our constitution are parts of our religion; that our laws are cradled in Christianity; that the mercy of the throne is an emanation from the mercy that is from above; that our very spirit of freedom is less deducible from the form of our government than from the records of our salvation. The word of God, of which we hold the church to be the best interpreter, properly understood, fully digested, and righteously put in operation, has imparted from age to age to our constitution, strong by its civil and stronger by its religious tendencies, that intimate adaptation of itself to the general good, that acknowledgment of the rules of equity which ought to obtain between man and man, and that solemn feeling that we are all "of one blood," all the passing travellers of a day, all journeying the same thorny road, and all bound to the same mournful rest, that hath intitled it to this pre-eminence of estimation. We cannot therefore, so much as in thought, separate the church from the state; nor do I see how, with any respect for the one, men should be so lost as they seem to be to all respect for the other. They would not be so if they considered that, united as the hierarchy is with the government, every attack upon the church of Eng-

land is an attack upon every man's landed possessions in England. We know what our beloved country has been with an established religion. Dare we a second time venture the experiment what it will be without one?

Let us, gentlemen, before we consent to countenance the vile attacks that are every day making upon the church; before we consent to shake hands and part with this guardian of our constitution, this maker of our manners, this nurse of those generous sentiments that have rendered us dear to all nations; before our liberal notions and generalizing frenzy have quite dethroned reason, let us avoid, with certain of its lukewarm and many of its treacherous members, the error of looking upon that noble foundation as only a larger sect, or even as merely the established religion of the land, and united in consequence by certain political ties to the state. It does indeed possess these advantages, but it deserves to possess them. It lays claim to this exclusive patronage of government; because, as its orthodox ministers and members conscientiously believe, it is the depository of the religion of Jesus Christ; because, as a church, it is built upon his word, and derives its influence from his authority; because its doctrines are apostolical, its discipline apostolical, its government by bishops apostolical; because every part of its polity not deducible from revelation is in unison with reason, and every part of its practice answerable to its polity. And by virtue of this its more perfect assimilation with pure Christianity than any other description of the Protestant reformed religion can boast of, and not for its alliance with the state, doth it now subsist and is supported by the people at large as the established religion of the realm, under the style and title of the Church of England; and endowed with all those peculiar privileges, advantages, and revenues, which, by law, appertain thereunto,

Our church is not intolerant ; it is not narrow in its notions ; it is not bigoted. Its basis of communion is laid as broad as is consistent with the credit and preservation of those doctrines on which it rests, and by which it is secured itself, and in its turn serves as their best security, and of that political constitution with which, for purposes of no common utility, it hath been deemed prudent to connect her. We do well to tolerate dissentaneous religious opinions, and we do still better by a regular establishment to gather up those opinions into a bond of unity. The scriptures are indeed the same holy word of God, though Donatus, and Arius, and Pelagius, and Nestorius, have each their own unhappy separate interpretations thereof ; and though these, branched out and new modelled into a variety of theological forms, and putting on fresh garments, and getting them new names, still continue to divide the Christian world into sects without number and heresies without end. But if by a liturgy at once in conformity with revelation and reason we can preclude this everlasting transubstantiation of creeds, and fix the mind, (ever wavering and unsteady when left to form its faith at its pleasure) in a belief more accordant with the doctrines of the earlier and purer ages of the church, such an established form of Christianity will deserve the protection of every regular government, and the cordial support of all who are wise enough to understand their own, or virtuous enough to consult the public interest by wishing well to such government.

The dissenters indeed, with their usual disposition to slander and bring into disrepute every thing connected with the establishment, have accused the church of England of symbolizing with the church of Rome. If we will believe these adversaries of our faith, all is with us upon a popish scale, all veering round to a popish cast and character. Our doctrines, our liturgy, our rites, ceremonies, vestments, even the very heart

and soul of the establishment, our episcopal form of church government; all it seems are borrowed from the Roman catholic polity, are founded on the Roman catholic love of power, and will finally merge into the Roman catholic faith. But surely we may be permitted the exercise of our reason in the selection of our devotion. What, is it unlawful to believe in the solemn articles of the Christian faith because the Papists happen to entertain those articles as well as ourselves? Do the doctrines of our common religion lose any of their sanctity or efficacy because they are the doctrines of the church of Rome as well as of the church of England? Because we will have nothing to do with the abuses, are we to give up the excellencies of papistical divinity? We may be allowed, I trust, to cleave to these, though we reject their propitiatory sacrifices, their transubstantiation, their purgatories, their veneration of saints and relics and images as idle and prophane inventions. No law, human or divine, can forbid us to go with the church of Rome, or with any other church, so far as we judge her to go with the revealed will of God. Secession from her communion, and the reflection is pleasing, hath not bred in us any undue animosity. We have never denied to her, fallen as she is, the character of a Christian church, nor refused to adopt such parts of her ritual and such articles of her faith as are clearly derivable from authentic scriptural sources, or as administer to the decorums of public worship; only departing from her where she runs wide of apostolical usage, and even then, (we will "glory in our infirmity" if it be one) separating with the charitable hope that we may one day providentially meet again. The church of England, to borrow a remark delivered in language as beautiful as the opinion, is, I think, correct, and the feeling affectionate—"the church of England did not imagine that all her obligations to our forefathers were can-

celled, because their children had degenerated ; because we broke through the restraints of childhood when we came to be men, she did not imagine that we had dissolved all obligations, or spurned all authority. Our reformers treated not their parent church so rudely ; they lamented her errors, but deserted not all her footsteps ; amid the ravages of time, they pencilled with a sigh the still remaining lines of faded beauty ; they deplored her dotage, but remembered her primeval reason ; they renounced her frailties, but they adored her virtues ; they put away what in her offerings was objectionable, but they clung affectionately and tenderly to her altars ; they trimmed their tapers afresh, but it was from that lamp which still burnt amid the tombs of their ancestors.”*

The dissenters have further accused us, in their zeal for the success of their great society which is to “fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord,” of neglecting, and of even opposing the circulation of the scriptures. We will not condescend to be alarmed at imputations which we do not deserve, though for the sake of others we may advert to what, ourselves alone concerned, we should despise. If these Bible societies—with their heart and soul formed out of dissent, and with only their bare bones covered and skinned over by the church—if these societies be the work of good men and for a good purpose, heaven forbid that any human being should dare to attempt their overthrow. No—all Christians would, in such a case, afford them the most cordial support. It would indeed be “to fight against God” to impede the circulation of his revealed word ; of that word

* See “the true Spirit of the Church of England considered, in a Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Norwich,” by the Rev. H. Bathurst, L. L. B. delivered at his primary visitation, in May, 1815. p. 15.

which, if we properly lay to heart, will make us happy hereafter by making us patient, and submissive, and happy here. We cannot live without the bible; we cannot die without it. We can neither run the race, nor reach the goal, nor obtain the prize without it. It must be found wherever our vices are found; wherever are found our virtues. It must be deposited beneath every man's pillow on his bed of death, and must constitute his consolation when he has no consolation besides. When I consider the changes and chances of this mortal life, and the awful scenes that await us beyond the grave; when I ask with the astonished prophet, "Lord, can these dry bones live?" darkness is upon the face of my inquiry until revelation springs forth and lets in the day. Despise the bible? Impede the circulation of it? No, believe me, we are far enough from pleading guilty to such a wretched indictment. We rejoice in its circulation. We revere every page of the inspired volume. We open it with meekness; we read it with comfort; we close it in humble and pious hope. But we will never consent to stain the solemnity of its mysteries by useless and idle disquisitions. We will never presume to touch these hallowed inspirations with unholy hands. We will never dare to unveil the awful covering which the Almighty in his mercy hath placed before them. That part of the divine code thus sacredly handed down to us we wish to preserve sacred. We consider it as the "prophetic book which was sealed," and which "neither elders, nor powers, nor angels, nor archangels" durst open.

Nor, though weak and interested men will be constantly carping at them, have the Established Clergy less claim upon public approval than the established church. Their constitutional principles, taking them as a body, have been marked at all periods by a strict adherence to that limited form of

monarchy which providentially obtains in this empire, and by a decided opposition to every movement that has for its object the exaltation of the democratic, and the degradation of the aristocratical branches of government. And if the state affords them her favour and protection, it is not done with any view of tempting them to her will, where that will runs counter to the interest of the realm, but of binding to her reasonable service the firmest advocates of regular government and the ablest defenders of pure and reformed Christianity. To the exercise of an unlawful prerogative, or the promotion of unconstitutional measures, the clergy are, I think I may say, uniformly adverse. Their patriotic feelings are as warm, their discernment as perfect, and their principles of honour as high and unsullied as those of any other description of men. They do neither corrupt, nor are they corrupted by the state. The state is, in fact, and she is sensible of it, upheld and cherished in her integrity by the zeal, and knowledge, and wise moderation of the church. All long established and long extended rule dependeth upon the proper influence of the church and its clergy. No legislature, neglecting the religious part of its polity, can make any part of it well hold and bind together. Try the experiment under what forms of government you please, and it will uniformly fail. For subjects to learn a temporal obedience to their rulers, those rulers must set their hearts to a spiritual obedience. They must give the church that honour in the eye of man, which, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," it ever hath had and ever will in the eye of God. They must give it this honour to give honour and a perpetuity of existence to themselves; to make their subjects honourable, and virtuous, and happy.

Be assured, gentlemen, the neglect of the established church at this juncture is the neglect of the

established government, nor can any be friends to that government, nor of course to their enjoyments and possessions under it, who are enemies, or even lukewarm to that church. The present spread of dissent is alarming; alarming, because it is most unprincipled and most unreasonable. I say most unreasonable; for what is there in dissent, as it is now managed and methodised, to attract towards it one convert of virtue or of learning? Consider, I beseech you, a few of the respective claims of the Church and of the Conventicle. If "an evil heart of unbelief" did not suggest and increase the religious indifference of many of our seceders, they could be at no loss to determine between pretensions so opposite and claims so inadequate. Sound in her faith, which she deduces from the purest sources of revelation; tolerant in her practice flowing mildly and naturally from such a faith; with no undue confidence in her own claims upon public protection, no vexatious hostility towards those who dissent from her; proud indeed, as it becomes her to be, of a liturgy alike solemn and rational, pious and decorous, but far from bitter against the formularies cast in a very different mould; anxious for uniformity of worship, because persuaded that such uniformity hath ever been the parent of sound Christianity, and the security of both public and private virtue, yet nothing adverse to the meek and humble spirit of dissent which seeks God and futurity through other, and in their opinion who modestly adopt them, more appropriate mediums; firm in the conviction of her own apostolic purity, but indulgent still to those who conscientiously find, or who even only weakly fancy cause to separate from her; less anxious to innovate upon an established ritual than to preserve a venerable antiquity, evermore the precursor of reverence and the nurse of holy thoughts and holy things; looking with an earnest hope upon her own "strong foundations,"

and with pity on the sectarian edifices that are perpetually springing up and decaying around her; much indeed reviled by the "cunning craftiness" of deceivers for a narrow bigotry which she never favoured, and a persecuting spirit which she never felt, but in every act and deed open to the face of the sun, where the tenor of her conduct was fairly weighed against the slights and slanders of her adversaries, by far "more sinned against than sinning."—This is the Established Church.

With little soundness in her faith, and no tolerance in her conduct; with creeds of a thousand complexions and commentaries to fit them to ten thousand tastes; with treachery ever active against the welfare of the establishment, and hypocrisy ever ready to conceal and cover up her treachery; constantly innovating upon her doctrines, her ritual, her polity, so that what is scripture to day frequently becomes heresy to-morrow, and decorum this moment a deplorable foolery the next; gathering within her fanatic circle all as many as she can find, both bad and good, (and often the worse the better) and less careful after their seduction to "bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord" than to teach them to "speak evil of dignities," and to revile that communion they have so ungratefully deserted; always bickering and jangling and disturbing her own religious peace, except when she calls off these domestic calumnies to unite them in one full tide of desecration against the common enemy; bold in her assumptions and blasphemous in her opinions, representing the Saviour of the world as a mere son of David with no claim to be considered as the son of God; the atonement as an idle notion; the doctrine of the trinity, on which the whole massy frame of Christianity is built, as an inexplicable and absurd riddle; baptism as forbidden, the Lord's supper as abused, the rites of the church as popish, the doctrines of the church

as unscriptural, the articles of the church as Calvinistic, the liturgy of the church as borrowed from the mass book of Rome, the ministers of the church (a few of their own weak and crazed stamp excepted) as "dumb dogs, lying down, loving to slumber;" and all without distinction who are not of their fold, who handle not the sword of the spirit in their coarse, familiar, disgusting way, as "walking in a vain shadow and disquieting themselves in vain."—This is the Conventicle.

And are there who prefer this strumpet to that fair and soberly matron by whom they have been bred up in a communion as pure, as rational, as conciliating, as ever marked a Christian church? Are there who fix their election on this abortion of piety, and turn from that calm and chastised devotion which gives us back in a contented mind the sacrifice that we offered in a humble and contrite spirit? O desolate and debauched taste! to apostatize from so goodly a rank and mix with "fugitives and vagabonds;" to depart from the "oracle of God" and hold consultation with "the witch of Endor."

Have you eyes?

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed

And batten on this moor?*

Put them to the test of an impartial sober comparison in all their points; in their learning, their knowledge, their taste, their piety, their accordance with all moral, all wise principles of polity, all fair, full, liberal legislation; and while the virtues of the conventicle are reduced to a mere *caput mortuum*, the church of England, tried seven times in the fire, shall come out every time more perfect and more purified.

Still, however, the church and the administration are the two scape goats that are usually driven into

* Shakespear's Hamlet.

the wilderness, laden with the sins of our monarchical government. The present Ministry has been burthened with a terrible weight of them ; and yet, separating the censure from the malice, much less of blame will be found to attach to them than the common voice probably is led to apprehend. It is rarely, gentlemen, that the merits of government in any nation, and especially in our own, are brought to an equitable decision. What we see is often adverse to an existing administration. What we hear is from objectionable quarters. What we feel are the taxes of government, frequently bearing hard upon our slender means. What people talk about are the expences of government. What petty politicians declaim upon are the abuses of government. What demagogues and Whig orators at their county election meetings and anniversary commemorations flourish and vaunt upon, are the alledged delinquencies of government, so that plain sober people who cannot, or who do not examine for themselves, are in danger of being seduced to entertain hard thoughts of their rulers. But we do not see the difficulties which this same government that we so unmercifully traduce has to encounter ; the slanders it has to out-live and out-credit ; the blessings it silently, regularly, and without ostentation, diffuses amid the various classes of the community, and the praises that are, in return, as silently and as unobtrusively heaped upon them by those who "study to be quiet," and who hold it as the best proof of their prosperity and their patriotism to "fear God and to honour the King." These lowly plaudits occupy the back ground, and can only be heard when idle ignorant censure ceases from its obstreperous clamours. Yet are they the plaudits that constitute the strength of an administration. Our reformers see but the faults floating on the surface of our national politics, and which they exaggerate twenty fold ; but

these humble and earnest friends who constitute, I am willing to hope, a large portion of the British empire, behold in the measures of government many deep and solid virtues which the artful machinations, or the envious spirits of our opponents, will never suffer them to acknowledge.

Surely the Whig gentlemen of landed possessions in this kingdom do wrong to countenance the violent aspersions every where heaped upon administration by base and designing minds. They ought to be quite certain that such bold opinions as they circulate, such hard judgments as they form, such determined conduct as they many of them evince against the measures of government, they will be able to answer for in their cooler moments, and when a better state of society shall frown upon those motives and movements which its present perturbed condition is but too prone to consecrate. I know not what they can think by thus shaking the public opinion as to the character and views of their rulers. They must be aware that public opinion constitutes in every kingdom the basis of public government, and that where there is a general feeling of disrespect towards those who have the direction of affairs, all rule must be rendered precarious. What a game of idiotism are they playing. To further their own petty views, which, if carried, would neither benefit themselves nor add an atom to the comfort of any soul about them, they are destroying all that binds up our national grandeur and happiness. They are taking from the established antiquity and respect of government that which they can never return. They are cutting up the ground on which they build their palaces, and enjoy their possessions, and indulge in their luxuries, and fatten away the day, and revel away the night; and while lolling amid the security which our free constitution, unworthy as they are, affords them, like "filthy dreamers" they waste their

hours of wantonness in "despising dominion and speaking evil of dignities."

I would beg of these unthinking adversaries of our peace, and especially of our keener-sighted democratical reformers, sucking all of them from the loathsome dugs of the same monster, to consider seriously how much must be laid waste within, before every thing is agreed upon to be sacrificed without. They must be obliged to go great lengths with their own minds e'er they can bring themselves to the work of overthrowing an existing administration or an existing government. They must turn their back on all arguments of reason, must dispense with all notions of rectitude, must obliterate all feelings of reproach. They must be compelled to represent that as loathsome which they know to be beautiful; that as injurious which they experience to be beneficial; that as deserving of destruction which they are conscious, at the very moment, is a most dear and merited object of veneration. All their bad passions must be loosened from their holdings; all their ambitions must be blackening into offence before they can call up a resolution commensurate with the deed, or a baseness mighty enough for the overthrow of such a government as that under which they behold their fellow creatures to live so happily, and that has existed so long, with such sufficiencies of worthiness.

There can be no wish in any honest mind to screen minds that are not honest. The Administration of a great Empire must ever be an important object. It is the *pro tempore* sovereign power of the state. The limited monarchy of England, with its appendages of place, pensions, honours, and preferments, is no government to gaze at with a vacant countenance and a dull sluggish indifference. It is not intended that the king should reign over a silent unresisting people, or the ministry act as they think proper. It is still less intended that the people should strip off the

regal habiliments and take the sceptre in their own hands, or that the administration should be addressed and petitioned out of office, with the threat, as insolent as I trust it will prove inefficient, that if the monarch listen not to the prayer of his loyal Whig subjects, thirsting for place and purification, revolution, or something very like it, shall compel him to it. Whatever we deem it necessary to do, let us do it, gentlemen, calmly, constitutionally, decorously. If the prerogatives of the crown be of too enormous a growth, let them be gradually pruned (as they have grown up) with a fair and gentle hand. If the rights of the people be in any instance invaded, let a firm dignified exposure of such invasion precede any attempt at a more tumultuous proceeding. If the ministry in their measures have decidedly run counter to the welfare of the country, let the voice of the country be heard, through their representatives, in a strong but respectful manner, and let decreasing majorities in parliament tell that ministry that they cannot continue their rule unless they change their conduct. But let us not childishly threaten to pare down prerogative as low as possible, and advocate the rights of the people at the peril of their rebellion; let us not vainly hope to awe by our fulminations whom we are incapable and impotent in moving by our reasons; let us not address the throne in language as coarse as it is unconstitutional, and as revolting as it is coarse, for the removal of ministers who have legislated without wisdom in the opinion only of the weak, and acted without virtue in the estimation only of the vicious. For goodness sake, let us refrain from playing the combined characters of folly and knavery to such a deplorable extent as this.

Certainly it is necessary that a Sovereign should be surrounded by just and able advisers. But a large portion of the nation think that our sovereign is

thus surrounded at present, and they might probably cease to think so if his present ministers were removed and a modern Whig administration called in to supply their place. The people of England as a body, as a cool, collected, loyal body, can feel no great respect for many of these present Whig opposition members in the house of commons. There is much of a democratic innovating spirit in their cast of character. Their hearts are not set right towards the established institutions of their country. There is somewhat of the rudeness of invective of an American congress in the line of their procedure.—Neither are certain among them anxious to weed out any of their former offensiveness though they scruple not to wear the Whig livery. The Woods and the Waithmans are now what they have ever been, nor do the Cokes or the Broughams part with an atom of their pride or presumption. The system of badgering is a favourite one with these descendants of Wilkes and Liberty, and where they cannot reason they can sometimes cough or sneer down their opponents. They have excellent properties about them for a rump parliament whenever an Oliver the protector shall make his appearance. Well might Mr. Spencer Perceval (the worthy offspring, I trust, of an honoured and lamented parent;) well might he in a late debate advert to “their unqualified unremitting harassing of the government;” to the “pompous manner in which they exhibited themselves, after coming down to the house fat from the pastures of popularity,” and to that “constant boasting which they made of their own power and strength.”*

With all their boasting, however, the present opposition have not been able to do much. Look, gentlemen, to the debate on the state of the nation,

* Debate on Windsor Establishment, March 16.

of the 18th of May last. Look to Mr. Tierney's statements upon that occasion, and see how all his unqualified abuse of ministers and their measures ended. See how a triumphant majority confirmed his declaration, that "the mind of man could not conceive an administration more dead to all the feelings by which persons in high stations were ordinarily governed: governed by no principle, and attached to no system, but that of vigorously maintaining themselves in their places, they cut such a figure in the eye of the world, that instead of being objects of admiration and envy, they sunk into objects of compassion and contempt."* If I wanted a most powerful argument in favour of the present administration, I would go for it, not to their friends, not to their dependents, not to the great body of the country who have long known their value and the difficulty of their situation in times so every way perilous as the present, but to their uniform and inveterate enemies, and even to the very leader of opposition himself. "He," says Mr. Tierney, "who voted against the present motion confessed by that vote his perfect confidence in the wisdom, vigour, and enterprise of ministers, his unqualified approbation of their measures, and his opinion that their career ought not to be interrupted."* The gallery was cleared and a division took place. Ayes 178. Noes 357. Majority for ministers 179!! for those ministers who "had pursued only what was base in principle and injurious in practice,"* and obtained too in a house of commons, to which, as Mr. Tierney confessed, "had been returned a larger proportion of men connected with no party than he had ever before remembered."* Surely this "trial of strength," as it was universally considered, proves in its result how high

* Evening Mail, May 17 to 19, 1819.

ministers stand at this time with the nation at large,* and how poor and pitiful a figure their Whig opponents present in both talent and estimation.

If we would believe these men, we could consider our present administration in no other light than as the scourge and the nuisance of their country; as idiots who have already nearly ruined it, and who, if suffered to continue longer in office, will entirely erase it from the list of nations. I will make no answer to these accusations. I will offer no apology for the measures of ministry. I will only, gentlemen, beg leave to remark, and I am sure you and every freeholder in the kingdom must have remarked it too, that whatever were their faults, they have preserved us a secure nation; whatever their follies, they have exhibited us a wise nation; whatever their contracted notions, they have immortalized us as a liberal, just, and glorious nation. With every weakness about them, they have made us respected; with every villainy, they have taught us to respect others. Admit them to have been (as our opponents represent them) a vile administration, and never did an administration of such a character conduce more to public virtue; never was a set of men whose sole object was to enslave and oppress the people, and to destroy the state,

* I cannot think this striking majority to be, as some imagine it, rather an argument for the want of all faith in opposition, than for any peculiar respect for administration; though even if the matter rested here, there would be gall and bitterness enough laid up for the Whig junto. But many circumstances, I think, go to prove that the present ministers do, several of them, rest in the hearts of the country as well as in the esteem of the regent. It is common to talk of their incapacity; but of what administration have people not so talked? And were the Whigs to come into office to-morrow, I question whether even they, with all their stupendous powers and all their invincible integrity, would steer entirely clear of that charge, and probably of another or two, not exactly of the same moral import, attached to the end of it.

so miserably out in their calculation ; for the ways and means they preposterously took to accomplish it have actually driven slavery and oppression into darkness, and placed that state in dignity, in firmness, in consistency, in reputation, from one end of Europe to the other, higher and holier than it ever stood before. With all their alledged crimes, their country has nothing to condemn them for. With all their alledged baseness, they have reflected no portion of it upon her. They found her, from the errors of her Whig administration, low, drooping, despised ; and let them depart from the guidance of her counsels as soon as they may, they will leave her full of years, full of honour, the hope, the admiration, and the refuge of the whole earth.

Yes—thus it is that they will leave her. But thus it is that she will not long continue, if the people, doing their duty by rallying, one and all, under the standard of government, government should neglect in so solemn an emergency to do its duty by the people. No man should lightly impeach the counsels of a nation. No man, with the state of society before him, should unadvisedly bring any part of the wisdom or virtue of the legislature into suspicion. Yet where the necessity seems pressing, where the error seems open, where the injury is daily and hourly felt, and felt through every gradation of life, to be silent is to be unjust towards those who rule and unfeeling towards those who obey. Bear with me then, gentlemen, if for a moment I seem to enter the ranks of the adversary, while I hazard a reflection or two on the duties which I conceive properly to belong to our own government at this perilous crisis. I may offend in the remarks which such a subject may call forth. I shall be sorry to do so ; but a larger sorrow would be mine if, in the pursuit of truth and good, I were to be lost and mean enough to omit it.

The task of government; in a nation like our own, is at all times an arduous one, but it is particularly so at present. We live in a period where we have to contend with the rugged passions of man's nature; with the vile arts that have given to those passions a most crooked tendency, a fatal bias towards every innovation, religious and political, that goes the length of disorganizing at once both spiritual and temporal obedience. I hold not with those—I trust I never shall—who consider our present ministers as men of neither wisdom nor courage; as “drivellers who crawl and crouch beneath the lashings they receive;” as men who “owe the retention of their places to the weakness of their opponents,” and who are content to “prop an empire as it totters to the brink of ruin.”* I have much respect for the ability which dictated these sentiments, but none for the sentiments themselves, or for the spirit in which they are delivered. I consider our present administration as an efficient one. But I will not conceal that though I do not believe them to be wanting in firmness, yet resolution is delayed till it ceases to be serviceable; till our adversaries have got the vantage ground and cannot be driven from it; till expectation is weary and enthusiasm is cold; till that which might have been done ceases to be attempted; till the pride that would have preserved us from indignity is lost amid the hesitations of policy and the prophecies of despair.

Government does not lose itself for want of wisdom or of rectitude, but it is daily suffering, and the country with it, through an unpardonable lenity and a disposition to rest in inefficient regulations for the public good, unmindful that that which represses not increaseth danger. Where we oppose with feeble-

* See the postscript of the Norwich Mercury of Feb. 27, 1819.

ness we turn our arms against ourselves. To work profitably we must work powerfully. Half measures against others are very decisive measures against ourselves. The present is a time when either government must do every thing or nothing. Against the numerous and daring adversaries of the state they must collect all the force of the state. One strong nerve must run through the whole body of their proceedings; one soul must inform all their motions. They must put every part of their duty into a compleat requisition, and their spirit must coalesce with their genius. All their attitudes of opposition must be attitudes of a settled defiance. The line of fear must be no where visible, must no where mix itself with the strong lines of hope and fortitude, and a greatness of soul superior to reverses of fortune where fortune wins the field from rectitude. Against terrible assaults nothing less than terrible efforts will avail. The strength of Hercules must be visible in the contortions of Antœus.

There is another species of resolution in which government is, I fear, defective; they are too mild and conceding towards those who themselves make no concessions. Democracy and dissent should not be favoured with the shadow of a concession in a state of things like the present. Concession, whether political or religious, is the bane of nations where reason raises her voice against it. Among the Romans we behold the regal power abolished after it had continued two hundred and fifty years. This was succeeded by a republican form of government and the election of consuls. Then to repress an unsteady people were created their dictators. After that, to humour the public voice, followed their tribunes. Then came their decemviri, then their military tribunes, then their consuls again, to which were added their censors. All these changes and concessions, made at the will or through the tumult-

tuary proceedings of the people, served but to stave off larger and larger demands attended with commensurate calamities, until at length kings once more took their turn to reign, and favours were asked and favours granted which ended, as with base minds might have been foreseen, in every thing but the sovereign power itself being conceded, and that they at length fairly ventured to seize upon by force.

If reform be wanted among ourselves, and I believe, to a certain degree, no sober person makes a doubt of it, government should take the business into their own hands and generously do at once what all are conscientiously persuaded ought to be done. They would thus avoid much danger and reap much glory. They would found prudent reform, not on the ebullitions of enthusiasm which years do presently dash and change, but on wholesome experience. Above all they would avoid the impolicy of suffering any really needful and valuable improvements to come from the arts and machinations of their professed adversaries. That honour they should reserve for themselves, for their shield of adamant, and not encourage the Broughams and Burdetts at once to disgrace and ruin the cause of all virtuous regulation. What plan of public beneficence will ever thrive which their sickening support has polluted? From their satellites and followers what species of reform could we expect? What is it that the country could consent to employ such low and dangerous tools for? Certainly for no purposes of solid glory. They know nothing of its nature. Their politics, like their souls, are base and grovelling. They look back upon history as they would look back on one of their own pitiful manœuvres, recollecting all the chicanery but none of the utility of the record. They see not the field which warriors, patriots, legislators, have trod; doing honour to their country and gathering renown unto them-

selves. They merely spell out their means to play the game in their narrow nauseous way. Seldom indeed do their speculations lay hold on integrity at all, and, when they do, they scarcely know what to make of her. They let her slip through their fingers again as quietly as they can, and get upon their old beaten road where the images are perfectly in recollection, and where craft, and low cunning, and a disgusting assurance meet, and solicit and obtain their benevolent attention at every step. These presumptuous reformers are for revelling in untried situations; but if government consult its own dignity and the credit and safety of the country, they will clip the wings of all such forward ambitions. For to reform is not to rage and tear away all before it. It is to go on coolly, to examine accurately, to reflect sedately, to graduate zeal to a just temperament with knowledge, and to behold the work when it is finished and be able to pronounce it good.

Every government is responsible for the morals of the community over which it holds its rule. Government is the former of men's minds and the rectifier of their judgments; the great pervading power that, if it do not find the people virtuous, must make them so. Every legislative act, considered in its effect, is an article of their creed and a precept for their conduct. An existing administration has evermore the instruction of the people, and therefore the welfare of the state in its keeping. Can any thing be more base, more short sighted, more every way impolitic and destructive than to found the wealth of a nation upon the demoralization of its people? Shew me a government that is reprehensible in this respect, and whatever impressive forms it may wear, whatever may be the extent of its commerce, the perfection of its manufactures, the progress of its agriculture, its arts, sciences, and learning, the decadency of such an

empire, unless all history and human nature itself be a forgery, can be at no great distance. A nation laying itself out for immortality and true greatness, must be constantly shaking off her corruptions and fresh plunging her soul into glory. She must behold her lasting grandeur in her virtue, her imperishable magnificence in her moral order, her full and final prosperity in her empire over the incitements, seducements, and varied temptations of the mind. To found national prosperity on the corruption of national manners; to steal the revenues of the state from her strength and sinews, is to erect the temple of her fame over the charnel house of death.

I would, gentlemen, that we could honestly lay our hands upon our hearts and absolve our own excellent government of all offence in this dreadful respect. We cannot. We shall find in her defect, manifest defect, in some instances overwhelming defect. We are willing to advocate the cause of established government. We are willing to defend those by whom that government is administered. We know and feel that no nation can possess a solid rule, the pledge of its happiness, without many allowances to its rulers. It is a mighty mass of mind they have to bring in subjection to the common weal, and difficult and distressing enough we can readily believe is the process. Still we cannot overlook outrageous discrepancies where so much of evil is connected with them, though, as far as our own kingdom is concerned, we shall certainly not be justified in charging the sins of government upon any particular description of its reigning administrations; for whether the court or country, the Whig or Tory party happen to be in power, the principle must, I fear, remain much the same; the line of policy must run on, and if the state is to be preserved in its greatness, that greatness must flow from the adoption of the

same, or nearly the same improvident system. The public safety must in too many instances be rooted in the deterioration of the public morals.

And this system obtains, and is obliged to be acted upon, at a period when its fatal consequences are hemming us in on every side, and making it difficult and almost impossible for legislature to keep pace with poverty and crime. There is such a body of close-compacted, close-linked, ramified disaffection and iniquity now combined against government, as was never before witnessed ; such a poisoned abuse of the press as bids fair to leave rebellion at the very threshold of every man's door. Our best writers have proved to us the demoralizing nature of dissent, the spread of jacobinical, of infidel, (foolishly called philosophical) of atheistical principles. They have shewn us how far our domestic depredations go, and every Old Bailey calendar gives us the increasing number and youth of our offenders, and the increasing heinousness of crime. Our condemnations are many, our acquittals more ; and those who are acquitted are generally brought up again for further and deeper offence. Our prisons groan with malefactors. They are ejected to-day and filled again to-morrow—we go on accusing, transporting, dooming to death ; and they go on sinning, and society goes on suffering.—In vain does our legislature endeavour to run parallel with the iniquity. Hardly any enactment that overthrows depredation in one quarter but is neutralized by some unfortunate codicil that affords it entrance in another. So wretched is the state of society, and so perfect the craft, and so desperate the resolution of base and depraved minds.

There is in human nature, and every government ought to bear it in mind, a propensity when cast down in wretchedness to sink into despair ; when overwhelmed with crime to be reckless of all crime.—Our own feelings will tell us this. Every common oc-

currence will convince us of it. It seems as if man was working on a dreadful scale of mystery, but we know that the work is constantly performing; that robberies are committed at the very place of execution, and that pillage and plunder are largelier indulged in at fires and at wrecks. Wherever distress and tribulation are going forward, there shall we often find the boldest guilt, the most heinous wickedness. This is surely a call upon legislation not only to stop vice at its commencement, but to cut off the temptations to it: to suffer nothing to remain that shall have the remotest tendency to take the soul in her unguarded moments and turn her from the paths of rectitude. I have indeed often thought that the general execration attendant upon remorseless depravities ought to be held of sufficient potency to deter men from engaging in them. It will I hope go some, perhaps a considerable, but it will not go all the way. On this principle it was, gentlemen, if you recollect, that the popular vengeance, in the case of Caligula, ceased not with his death, but was carried forward to the assassination of his wife Cesonia, and extended itself, by I know not what spirit of horribly virtuous revenge, to his only child, though an infant and full of innocence in her cradle. Nay so compleat was the darkness of their retaliation, that by a decree of the senate the very coin was melted down, that no memorial might be left to posterity of the existence of such a reproach to our common nature.

I will not stop to inquire particularly how far the neglects of Government may tend to render the mind thus desperate, or may be implicated in the miseries that crime is every where spreading about the land. I will content myself with the general observation, (it grieves me to make it) that death is in the process of some of our present legislative regulations; death, temporal and eternal. A synod convened for the express purpose of corrupting a great nation could, I

think, hardly do it more effectually. The language of these regulations, honestly construed according to their spirit, would run nearly thus — We have given you an established religion ; we have nobly endowed ; we have allied it with the state ; but we have suffered the adversary to enter, and to unchristian the Christian creed and unsolemnize the Christian mysteries, and plant his dagger in the heart of the church whenever he feels so disposed — We have indulged you with state lotteries in the expectation that they may tempt poverty to crime, and villainy to imposition, and all from the great public paths of sobriety and industry.—We have erected for you, through every part of our dominions, inns, and taverns, and ale-houses, and night cellars, that they may draw to them all that have money to spend from the support of their families, and health to spare for indulgence in intemperance ; that old and young may huddle and blaspheme together, and sin and death set on the same chair, and the riot and rebellion of the day be crowned by the revels and depredations of the night.— We have tolerated, for your improvement in national morals, every kind of stage representation that can impair delicacy or corrupt innocence.—We have licenced, indirectly indeed, but yet full enough for the purpose, cockings, boxing matches, gambling, and every pursuit and amusement that has a tendency to brutalize the feelings and to sink man in the scale of his creation.—We have given to magistrates a power to regulate the abuses of the Lord's day, but we have taken especial care to deter them from ever making any material use of it.—We have instituted our common law for all who feel themselves injured to have recourse to ; but we have made that law, originally undeformed, so frightful that no one shall dare approach it, and its practitioners so numerous, so unprincipled, so expert in their chicaneries, so heavy in their charges, and so competent to stop or pursue

proceedings at their pleasure, that, sooner than fall into the hands of such defenders, men shall submit to every indignity and put up with every loss.—We have, finally, permitted you to listen to our parliamentary debates, but for fear you should run away with any crude ideas of the wisdom of the legislature, we have loaded them with an unusual asperity, have reviled each other, and all the orders and institutions of the state with as full a soul as if they were none of them worth preserving, and so delivered, have indulged the public with seeing them printed and dispersed over every quarter of the empire, to be read, and digested, and acted upon by those who are stirring up the people against their rulers, and really seeking the ruin of that government which we have thus prepared them to despise and encouraged them to destroy.—

I would all this were a mere scenic representation and with no ground whatever for the wild assumptions. But alas! we have these, and, were it pleasant to insist upon them, many more I fear of these “infectious visitings.” I am always sorry to find any immoral species of finance defended. It puts patience to the test, and cuts up all apology for it at once. Mr. Canning, in his vindication of lotteries,* seems to go on the ground that, in the present general dearth of subjects for taxation, no adequate substitutes are to be found. Mr. Vansittart in his reply to Mr. Lyttleton on that occasion is poor and inconsistent, so inconsistent as nearly to bring the flush of shame on the cheek of virtue. Mr. Wodehouse, in the spirit becoming a county member, and with a consistency fully answerable to his former declaration, and which must, I am sure, endear him almost equally to his constituents and to his opponents, remarked, “that after

* Evening Mail, May 3 to 5, 1819.

all he had heard, and anxious as he was to support the finances of the country, he could not give his vote in favour of a tax which added to the revenue only in proportion as it spread immorality and crime amongst the people. Amongst the lower orders, the spirit of gambling sometimes led to robbery, and in some cases to suicide. It destroyed the only source of a poor man's character and happiness. In the present situation of the country, he was ready to support the continuance and imposition of any taxes which, without corrupting morals, might be necessary to enable the government to meet the difficulties with which it had to contend."* I do most cordially join issue with him in this opinion, and I further believe with Mr. Plunkett, that "of all the duties incumbent on a government, there was none more sacred or pre-eminent than to act as the guardian of public morality."* My Lord Castlereagh indeed, to the surprize, I fear, and regret of many of his firmest admirers, calls all this "the refinements of a false and sublimated morality."* No indeed, my Lord, it is neither false nor sublimated. It is a morality of very long standing; has passed the ordeal of ages, and has received the sanction of wisdom and virtue in every one of them. There is nothing refined or sublimated about it. It is common morality, useful morality, the morality of the learned and of the unlearned, of the prince and of the peasant. It is that large, holy, awful morality, by which in the eternal rolls of Providence it is decreed that "kings shall reign" and empires flourish, and without which, that the ablest statesman shall legislate, and the acutest diplomacy be exerted for their preservation in vain.

Among the reforms which government will find it necessary to make, not to public clamour but to ge-

* Evening Mail, May 3 to 5, 1819.

neral sober opinion, are, I think, the following. They must restrict in some reasonable measure, for though I allow the experiment to be a delicate one, the salvation of the country depends upon it, the liberty of the press. They must firmly cease, here no delicacy is required, from an unbounded toleration of the dissenters.* They must protect the established church in the reception of her revenues, and, if they would preserve the peace of both church and state, must make some, and very efficient alterations in the tithe system.† They must reform the

* If it be necessary to preserve our establishment in church and state, the corporation and test acts must be necessary. I think there is, at present, more danger from the large and floating masses of dissent in this kingdom than from the Roman Catholics; and every argument urged against the emancipation (to take their own term) of the latter, may with equal force be alledged against that of the former. Besides, to exempt one from its wholesome restraints would be to exempt both. If dissent favour republicanism it ought to be restrained. If it would unmodel our church, and disjoin it from the state, and; acting upon its own principles, it must make a point of conscience of doing this, these restraints must be continued. When we recollect what dissent has done, we shall not be forward to unmuzzle the remorseless monster to see what it will do.

† A profession of good will to the church is soon made, and, to say truth, some of our adversaries are lavish enough in making it. But we can trust no profession where the practice runs counter to it. I believe the clergy, take the kingdom throughout, to be even at present in the reception of not more than one half of the value of the fair, yearly produce of their tithes. I think this would be found to amount almost to a demonstration. And yet, how is this moiety of their possessions paid? How indeed! Nothing would be of more service to both the clergy and the state than to divide many of our large farms into small ones. We should get a better composition, and government would not hear one half of the agricultural complaints that at present stun the nation. Uniformly it is the great farmer that opens his mouth widest, and sends forth his fulminations against church and state with most frequency and fury. The little farmer is generally contented if he can make things hold tolerably together; and bad seasons and low prices he carefully remedies by increased patience, and increased industry

practice of the law, and not suffer the vilest part of the profession at once to ruin its credit and to run away with its profits. If this be not done and speedily, we shall need a fresh statue of mortmain to protect the landed possessions of the realm from falling into hands that will clutch them too close, and bind them too fast ever to permit a hope of obtaining them back again.* They must put down at least one half of the public houses in the land, those sinks of idleness and immorality which corrupt society with a more fatal certainty than our laws, and religion, and national schools united, will ever be able to reform †

and frugality. The great farmer, whenever he fails to heap his table with luxuries from the overflowing of his fields, turns sulky upon society, and conning over his Holkham catechism, curses churches and parsons, and tithes and taxes, and all the fooleries, and stupidities, and iniquities of a Tory administration. Yet are these too often the unfeeling masters that scoop the marrow out of a poor man's bones, and then leave him, stiff and dry, to totter to the grave, with his miserable parish allowance, as quick as he can.

* The profession of the law is not nice in its ways and means. These gentlemen are pawnbrokers upon a new and magnificent scale, lending out their moneys (how gotten we stop not to inquire) upon houses and lands, and goods and chattels, and whatever they can turn to a sweeping per centage, come it from whence it will. They are the general receivers of pledges which the native hand is too weak any longer to withhold; the common reservoirs into which every broken cistern—and the defalcations are numerous—pours its waters. I believe the practice of the law, both in town and country, at this moment to cry aloud for reform, with a much stronger and juster voice, than either the royal prerogative, the established church, parliamentary representation, or the corruption of the rotten boroughs. To these censures I must be understood to make many exceptions; many in my own private knowledge; but none that will invalidate my opinion of the profession as a contriving, artful, practising body.

† The difficulty the clergy labour under in regulating the public houses in their respective parishes, and the little countenance they receive herein from the magistrates, cannot but have an ill effect on the morals of society. The laws are there infringed every hour of the day, nothing detected, every thing over looked. The swill from these troughs is poured into the national treasury, the brewer

They must abolish every species of immoral finance, whatever may be the defalcation as to revenue ; and by one general tax levied with an awful impartiality on all sorts of property, and on a scale that shall bespeak at once the justice, and the policy, and therefore the efficiency of the measure, dissolve the union of fraud and iniquity which has long reigned in the collection of a variety of discordant imposts for the support of the state. Such a property tax will be a relief from many vexations ; will be more simplified and certain in its operation ; will be at least equally productive with those now had recourse to, and will be felt as a blessing and relief by all who wish well to government, or to the due ordering and prosperity of their own domestic affairs *

To those who ask, why in a season of so much danger urge such bold and dangerous experiments, I reply ; because it is necessary to urge them ; because a great empire cannot be preserved at any time, or for any duration of time, without its legislature acting upon such a broad and honest scale ; because these are regulations which not an ungovernable multitude, not a set of desperate demagogues, not mere lenders of themselves to party views for the purposes of party ambitions deem essential, but

pursed out with the profits of his beer barrels, and nobody seems to care how the concern is carried on, so long as these libations flow for the good of the state, and the *regular returns* continue to be made. Here be your incentives to public virtue ! Spend your money, poison your health, destroy your morals, and save the empire !

* I mention not the poor's rates ; a great, a wise, a generous fund probably in its origin, but now so abused, every way so abused, as to become one large instrument of the corruption instead of the salvation of the poor. Other reforms, however, must precede, I think, any material improvement in this mode of maintenance, though long to continue it on its present system must absolutely reduce government to despair, and the nation too.

which the great, the injured, the majestic body of the people of England, attached to the church of England, feel to be their security from danger in an hour when danger is assuming all disguises and menacing them in all attitudes; because in these concessions every man will see his duty towards government recompenced by the paternal regards of government; because they are concessions that lead to no fanciful, no pernicious rights; are demanded only for good, with the view of being turned only to good; and because if such reforms as God and nature, and the quiet and security of the realm, and the omissions of past times, and the necessities, the vices, the virtues of the present, and the fair expectancies of posterity all unite in imploring are much longer withheld, every description of subjects may form one coalition of complaint, and rights, and duties, and allegiance be sacrificed on this mournful altar of their wrongs, in spite of the best wishes and the fullest endeavours to preserve them.

The duty of government also as to national education at this eventful period is a most important one.—Of the necessity of such education we cannot doubt. Of its utility, with a superintending Providence to watch over its course, we will not. Man is cast upon the field of this world to fit him for something better. It is a field for the subduction of every vice and the exercise of every virtue, and he hath a nature susceptible of such exercise. Life may be made any thing of, and man may be made any thing of. This is his preparatory school, his sole solitary probation for heaven. He comes to it for a poor winter's day and then returns to his home; often overcharged with misery, often overwhelmed with guilt. That God intended man to be poor, and “in the sweat of his face to eat his bread,” I know; but I do not know that he intended him to be desolate. I am not certain that he was sent here by a good and gracious

Providence, to descend into his grave with mind, body, and estate all equally forlorn and defenceless. That such hath hitherto been, in a good measure, his condition is no reason why that condition should not be amended. We owe too much to the poor to suffer them to remain the pitiable objects they have been.—We owe it to ourselves, to society, to our common human nature, to better their mental capacities. If experience, as I am glad to find some think,* proves that

* The seventh report of the general committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Society for the Education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church, lately printed, observes, “there is nothing that evinces the utility of communicating instruction to the lower orders of society more than the tendency it manifestly has to the prevention and diminution of crime. The following comparative statement of the number of commitments to prison, in the different parts of the British empire, drawn up from the official returns lately presented to parliament, sufficiently prove the fact, that where the poor are the most ignorant, there they are the most criminal; and that in proportion as light and knowledge spread, crime less abounds.—With regard to England in particular, it appears from this document, that the great manufacturing county of York, the county of Northumberland, which contains the large town of Newcastle, the counties of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, in all of which the people are in general well educated, contain infinitely fewer crimes, on an average of their population, than the inland counties of Bedford, Berks, Buckingham, Cambridge, and Hertford, where there are no large towns; and the people are less instructed.” This is gratifying. I wish the future condition of society may, in every part of the kingdom, bear out and confirm this opinion. The comparative statement alluded to gives us the commitments, in proportion to the whole population in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Cornwall, opposed to those in Somersetshire, Hants, Devon, Kent, Sussex, and Suffolk. In the former case they are found to be, upon the average, as 1 to upwards of 3800; in the latter, as 1 to about 1800. I think I recollect the Guardian, in Addison’s time, expressing a somewhat similar benevolent opinion respecting the future good effects of the multiplication of charity schools and schools for education. He prophesied that we should probably have a new race of beings in a very few years. They are slow in “bursting the shell and springing to life.” We have seen nothing of them yet. However speculative reasoning must not stand against fact.

the very smallest degree of education diminishes crime, it may fairly be presumed that a somewhat larger, sounder portion of it will be attended with results still more beneficial.

Much is to be forgiven in all cases to virtuous intention; and men must be pardoned every aberration from presumed, and even perhaps from acknowledged policy, which is made for the sake of a supposed attainableness in virtue. Whether our national education will eventually make a new race of beings of us, and bring to a greater perfection the present confused state of society, we must not enquire, nor can any due experience yet inform us. There is much, I think, both to hope and to fear. Much to hope, if Government will fairly do its part and perform the whole of its duty in this awful undertaking; much to fear if the business be confined to a little low-smattering instruction, mechanically afforded and coldly countenanced, and unaided in its operation by any care on the part of our legislature to remove out of the sphere of that operation "all things that offend," and that may minister to iniquity. As general instruction advances general temptation must be decreased, or the progression of the opening faculties will be only a progression from a limited to a larger field of pernicious operation. The arts of reading and writing may be made subservient to good, or to very vile purposes. It is the application of every sort of knowledge that determines its utility.

I have never yet met with any arguments to convince me that a virtuous education is not much before a learned one. How far this opinion is general I am unable to say. Judging from the present practical mode of education, and the relaxation of discipline, I fear it is not. Relaxation of discipline is, in every instance, relaxation of morals, from the petty village school to the royally endowed seminary. Humility in the instruction of our youth seems to be

almost systematically discouraged, and what is termed a manly character is to be formed, which usually divests the mind of tenderness and imparts to it a most disgusting and unmanly conduct. This original defect is rarely got over, and in process of years the suffering comes home to all parties; for whatever be the value we attach to this manly spirit, we purchase it too dearly where the price is paid down in solid manly virtue. The elegant Athenians, all life and soul, left old age to find a seat where it could; the ruder Lacedemonians fixed the venerable character in their own. I should be glad to know how government is to be conducted where the mind is attempted to be formed without early impressions of humility; how society is to be maintained if men spurn at such acquiescence and restraint as experience has proved essential to its well being. The effect of a good education will be seen in the degree of obedience daily and hourly elicited by the current duties of our station; but we may rest assured that the result of a bad one will be soon felt both in and beyond the domestic circle. Where there is an end of authority, there is an end of security. To withdraw submission from our parents falls very little short of withdrawing allegiance from our Sovereign, and nothing short of dispensing with veneration altogether towards our rulers.

I am afraid our modern system of education, gentlemen, upon the liberal principle plan will not do us much good, will indeed rather be converted into an instrument of disaffection. Its aim is to put old heads upon young shoulders without waiting for the operation of years; to take nothing upon trust, nothing upon authority; to pay a blind implicit deference to neither "tutors, governors, pastors, or masters." Before any thing is done every thing is to be canvassed; before any thing is believed every thing is to be doubted. Not a religious article of

any kind must be received without an *imprimatur* from the philosophy of reason. The tendency of such a system is manifest ; disobedience, disobedience in all its branches for the present, and for the future a race of upstarts, bastard slips from the tree of knowledge, of ungovernable temper and most prophane manners. Such a notable process will be far enough from generating a Newton or a Locke, a Bacon or a Boyle, but will very plentifully furnish us with Spinosas in our religious, and with Cromwells and Bradshaws in our political concerns. Their mode of instruction will not have made them religious, but ridiculers of religion ; will not have settled their Christian creed or their moral practice, but will have taught them to despise every creed, and to renounce and invalidate every precept flowing from it ; will have furnished them with just such a stock of knowledge as has prepared the mind for the reception of all that vanity recommends, and all that wisdom disdains and reproveth.

Little, upon such principles, can be done for a monarchical government, though much may be done against it. Without inculcations of submission, and deeply fixing the distinctions of rank and the appropriate duties of station in the young mind, education must become a doubtful good. Neither can youth be taught, nor men be governed, if such inculcations be dispensed with. We want that mental discipline, (let us not, gentlemen, be ashamed but proud of the confession) which shall implant right affections towards an established government and an established religion. Nothing short of this, nothing in any material respect failing herein, will turn our national education into a national blessing. All our contemplative powers will be powers of mischief if they be not thrown into this venerable channel. Directed into any other course they will spread over the land, not to the fructification, but to the hardening and

sterile curse of the soil. The mind of man, once escaped from its dark prison, is of no neutral nature. It goes on increasing in its capacities of knowledge, in its extension of ideas, in its application of those ideas to all and every thing about it. The world will throw around it her disguises and allurements, and, if it judge and chuse not with prudence, it will chuse perniciously for both itself and society. Where a country is impoverished, is thinly planted, is deficient in power, in civilization, in luxury, education may be neglected with less danger, and may with more indifference be left to make its approaches as it will. But in an empire full in every respect; at the very acme of every improvement and almost of every indulgence; in an empire like our own great and numerous, and increasing in its population and its powers, both the neglect of education and the wrong conduct of it,* or the feeble half-formed endeavours for its promotion will be decisive of its fatality. To suffer the strength of a nation to enlarge itself without, at the same time enlarging that mental discipline by which alone it can be restrained in its growing rudeness, is to deliver the country over to a most assured destruction.*

* With respect to this wrong conduct, nothing can be more pernicious than to let those have the least concern with it, politically, who have no concern at all about it in their hearts. How far Mr. Brougham is a fit person to intrust with the management of any reform of vital importance to the state, the "Reports of the late select committee appointed to inquire into the Education of the Poor," the "Letters" to that gentleman by Dr. Ireland and Mr. Clarke, and the "*Vindiciæ Wykehamicæ*," of the Rev. W. L. Bowles, will inform us. I know not by what motives Mr. Brougham was solicited to be guilty, in the exercise of his strangely appointed dignity, of rudenesses which certainly no motives worthy of entering a good mind can excuse, or even extenuate. For his conduct towards Dr. Wood, the present Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, his superior, I apprehend, in every respect, he must be left to blush in secret and to repent at his leisure. The Univer-

In this world one thing is constantly hinging and turning upon another; one great change constantly begetting the necessity for another. We are now arrived at that awful verge of polity where we dare no longer go on without a national education, and we shall soon find that such an education will endure no trace or shadow of immoral finance. O there is such a deep dreadful inconsistency between them, that it is as if we would compel God and the devil to league and walk hand in hand together, the one to purify, the other to defile the soul as soon as it is purified. But I must desist from the subject. It is a "deep world of darkness" that I dare not adventure upon. The vail must be rent asunder by bolder hands, for it conceals, I assure you, forms of no ordinary horror. Of one thing we must all feel convinced, that no mode of public instruction will stave off such public temptations to crime as are, at present, thrown full in the paths of both the ignorant and the informed mind.—I go but a little, a very little way; when I assert, that,

sity, than this, boasts not a higher or more excellent character. Through a long academical life, devoted to the interests of the society over which he now, the same encourager of lowly merit he ever was, so happily presides, he has made friends of all with whom he has been thrown into connection; and of those thus given to him (it is a great thing to say of any man) "has he lost none." I recollect that the virtuous Archbishop Cranmer was once suffered to wait with grooms and lackeys at the door of his insulting enemies. With much the same painful feelings will it be remembered, that the Master of St. John's was cited and interrogated at the bar of impudence by the chairman of the Education Committee, Henry Brougham, Esq. M.P. F.R.S. Dr. Wood, with a felicity apportioned to his claims upon general esteem, has gone through life with, I believe, no shadow of insult from any honourable mind. He can afford therefore to forgive this act of disgusting coarseness from, probably, the only man in the kingdom capable of committing it, and, alas! miserable enough to commit it only to his own reproach. To a tutor so deserving of every grateful recollection from his pupils, I owe, and pay with gratitude, this poor inadequate tribute. Many of his kindnesses are now long removed, but none of them are obliterated.

with an immoral system of finance, every mode of instruction will become a whet nurse to the gallows. On a subject, gentlemen, of this vital importance in a large and free state, let us speak to government in a language that shall be both heard and attended to.— Here it is that our opposition to the measures of administration will be patriotism, and patriotism of the highest cast ; will be virtue, and virtue of the most awful form. Here it is that men of all parties who have honest views ought firmly to unite, and press upon ministers the immediate rescinding of regulations, no matter in what esteem they may be held, so entirely at war with the best feelings of our nature and the best interests of the country. The constitution of the realm will bear us out in such a procedure ; the religion of the realm will be grateful to us for it ; and if there be any narrow law of policy that presumes to forbid it, let a stronger law interfere, the law of God and of conscience, and put every petty financial motive to the blush. This conduct shall call down upon us the blessings of thousands ; shall indeed give us the hearts of the country, which by us shall be disposed of, in return, to an administration virtuous enough to make this sacrifice to the peace, the comfort, the security of all, and wise enough to make it before it be too late.

If, further, the preservation of a state be the object which it ought to be, every government should not only adapt its legislative regulations, in some reasonable degree, to the spirit of the present times and the nature and improvement of the people, but should carefully consult the rich and valuable pages of times past. They who would secure a living monarchy must ponder over the ashes of the dead. They must mark their periods and causes of commencement and decline ; how they attained to, and how they lost their greatness. The preservation of kingdoms is a standing miracle. Their decacy and fall are often no

less miraculous. The great empires of antiquity are a fine exemplification of the solemn assurance of scripture, that "doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth." Look to the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman name. See them in their poor beginnings, their wonderful growth, their universal sway, their final decline and dissolution. They spring from darkness; they desolate, they rule the world; they depart into darkness. They do the work and will of the Most High, and, having done it, they are gone. They perish not indeed all in the same way; but when become corrupt and with no hope of amendment or revivification, they all do perish. In the midst of general calamity, or general triumph; while the funeral is going forth or the feast is crowned with the sparkling bowl, there is the same hand still working behind the curtain, and "confounding the wisdom of the wise," and uncovering, and rocking to and fro the massy pillars of their dominion, and preparing the strength of their "chariots and of their horses," their arts, and arms, and magnificence for the oblivion that awaits them. In the height of her grandeur, in the midnight hour of her revelry, the Assyrian empire passed away. A mysterious power was upon her, and all was as a dark and frightful dream; this moment she was, and the next as if she had never been! The battle of Arbela tore away the Persian diadem, neither overcome as yet by luxury nor crime. The sun of the Grecian monarchy arose, and, in almost the same instant, went down in blood. Rome, gigantic still in her decay, fell not at once. A boundless empire of countless tributaries and faithless, yet was she not easily rent from her deep foundations.—The Goths, the Huns, the Vandals, the Heruli, all strike at her vitals and prepare her for her funeral.*

* I offer no apology for giving to my readers the following remarks from a very judicious author. They are curious, and per-

When we enquire who thus deliverèd over the Assyrian to the Persian, the Persian to the Greek, the Greek to the Roman power, and who scattered the bones and ruins of this last princely realm over the world, and from her ashes raised up new empires to

haps sufficiently probable; and while they set God's general providence over the affairs of this lower world in the preservation and destruction of empires in a just light, they do not, I think, ill account for the subject of his speculation. "I have sometimes thought, how it should have come to pass, that the infinite swarm of that vast northern hive, which so often shook the world like a great tempest, and overflowed like a torrent; changing names, and customs, and government, and language, and the very face of nature, wherever they seated themselves; which, upon record of story, under the name of Gauls, pierced into Greece and Italy, sacking Rome, and besieging the capital in Camillus his time; under that of the Cimbrians, marcht through France to the very confines of Italy, defended by Marius; under that of Huns or Lombards, Visigoths, Goths, and Vandals, conquered the whole forces of the Roman empire, sackt Rome thrice in a small compass of years; seated their kingdoms in Spain and Africk, as well as Lombardy; and under that of Danes or Normans, possess themselves of England, a great part of France, and even of Naples and Sicily: how (I say) these nations, which seemed to spawn in every age, and at some intervals of time discharged their own native countreys of so vast numbers, and with such terròr to the world, should about seven or eight hundred years ago leave off the use of these furious expeditions, as if on a sudden they should have grown barren, or tame, or better contented with their own ill climates. But I suppose we owe this benefit wholly to the growth and progress of Christianity in the north; by which, early and undistinguished copulation, or multitude of wives, were either restrained or abrogated; by the same means learning and civility got footing among them in some degree, and enclosed certain circuits of those vast regions, by the distinctions and bounds of kingdoms, principalities, or commonalties. Men began to leave their wilder lives, spent without other cares or pleasures than of food, or of lust; and betook themselves to the ease and entertainment of societies: with order and labour, riches began and trade followed; and these made way for luxury, and that for many diseases or ill habits of body, which, unknown to the former and simpler ages, began to shorten and weaken both life and procreation."

Sir William Temple's Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

glory and to crime, we have our solution at hand.—
 “The lord hath prepared his seat in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all.” They had checked iniquity in others, and were become iniquitous themselves.—
 Their destiny was sealed, and their destruction followed of course.

We have now, gentlemen, in retrospect, the scenery of upwards of four thousand years. All the great empires of antiquity have passed in review before us; their laws and usages, their abstinences and indulgencies. We have seen how they flourished and how they fell; how they got up their hearts, and what silently knawed, and consumed, and eat them away; what administered to their reputation and strength, and how that strength was withered and that reputation perished. And now we see the rule of their universal dominion over, and the offspring of their fame, some adopting, some rejecting their laws; some governing in their departed despotism, and some flourishing in their departed glory. Let us look at these awful vestiges of desolation, and take up our instruction from their misfortunes. The Assyrian grandeur must not be ours if we wish to remain a frugal, temperate, great nation. We must reject the Persian pride if we are desirous of uniting other kingdoms under a bond of affection to us. We must avoid those intestine tumults of the Grecian states that merged their republics into monarchy, if we would not deliver ourselves over a prey to some potent neighbour; and we must detest the levelling principles of tribunitial Rome and the ferocious spirit of her populace, as we hope to continue the subjects of a free state and of a limited monarchy; of that monarchy which congregates around her all the virtues, and casts behind her all the infamies of these ancient governments. Nor must we be too grasping and covetous after empire, but rather covet to rule well what we have. The Macedonian, though he wielded

a mighty, wielded an empty sceptre ; for none of his descendants were suffered to retain any possessions in that world he had conquered, or to draw the thread of their existence to the common length. Scarcely had he buried in a poor and narrow grave all the large ambitions of his soul, e'er a quenchless treason swept away his race and name, and the treachery which thus hurried them to an early rest presently made its own dark tomb, and laid itself down by the side of those it had bereft of light and life. So changeable a thing is fortune ; so sad a pursuit is ambition, and so transitory the magnificence which men covet and the very kingdoms over which they rule.

What ages may produce we cannot tell. What they have produced we know. When we recollect that a time was when this kingdom was not ; when only Greece marked the civilized existence of Europe, and the deserts of Africa gave light to the world, we can believe that a time will be when the British empire, and the French monarchy, and the kingdoms of the continent shall decay as fast as they have risen, and other nations more simple, more temperate in their habits, more severe in their morals, shall tread us underfoot ; and that from the remnants of our present political world shall be gathered up another world to go through the same successive stages of refinement and debasement, and then to follow us down to the dust. What was Greece when the Asiatic courts were high in splendour ; when the Babylonian, the Persian, the Mede, were stretching their rule of glory over the dark dominions of the earth ? What was Rome when Greece was in the splendour of her fame, or England when Rome was blasting and blazing in her meridian ? What, till of late have been Russia and America while England was fixed in her greatness ? Or what were any of these kingdoms when Egypt, hoary in years and in

science, was trimming her lamp and sending forth her light to every quarter of the globe? The decadency of empire is gradual, but certain; gradual, because it takes time to become great, and, after so becoming, to decline; certain, because conquest introduces luxury, and luxury effeminacy, and because the images of death multiply as the inlets to ambition and to vice are multiplied. We cannot be great without being virtuous, and alas! almost the moment we are great, we cease to be virtuous; and then is seen the destroying angel in the clouds of heaven, and our fame and our infamy pass alike into oblivion.

Politically we cannot scorn the page of history, nor turn us from the decadency of states and empires. Morally we can as little disregard these epitomes of human greatness; they subdue our wild thirstings after fame, and throw us back upon useful and wise recollections. As a part of mere studious research, the subject connects itself with our fondest sources of literary enjoyment. We behold Babylon faded into a compleat forgetfulness, and Athens hardly redeeming herself from the lapse of ages. We see Rome yet lingering in departed majesty, and filling the earth with her vestiges of magnificence as she once filled it with her renown. I envy the traveller who visits this consecrated spot; lonely, silent, bringing back the dead images of ancient years, and touching a chord that still vibrates, after the sound is vanished, to all that passion sanctifies and all that patriotism adores. It is beautiful to talk with past times and to live past ages over again; to call before us the awful forms gone down to the dust; to seem to hear their voices, to imbue us with their sentiments, and to feel the soul chastised into virtue by such reflections as such situations are calculated to inspire. It delighteth the mind with I know not what sort of charmed melancholy, to sit amid the still

ruins and contemplate the decays of nature, and of the world which we inhabit, and of all that gave colouring, and spirit, and magnificence to that world ; to ponder over the vast and classic mausoleum dimly spread around us ; to see how greatness has shrouded from mortal recollection ; how cold ambition lies ; how glory hath shrunk and hid itself in the chambers of death ; how poor, and forsaken, and joyless the scene that once maddened the earth with its triumphs, and how one long night of silence is thrown over Imperial Rome, where, mixt with her Phydian sculptures and the ruins of her grandeur, in that rest of ages so awful to reflect upon, " man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more." Her palaces, her porticos, her temples, statues, triumphal arches, green with years and venerable in their decay, are all mouldering through their lines of beauty, and sinking, like their parent state, into forgetfulness and dust.

O ! how envy would die in us, could we cast back reflection on the objects of it as we do on the grandeur of departed empires ! To see the glories of the human mind this moment, and its desolations the next ! To behold it laying itself out for a narrow and uncertain fame, and content to bear the evil judgments of the present time for the cold and cheerless hope that slander will sleep with it in the grave, and that posterity will do it an ampler justice ! The genius of man is, alas ! the seal of his suffering. All his rich stores of intellect are often but stores of uneasiness to himself. How short, how miserably short too, are his executions of his conceptions. Could he give the images that fill the mind in his happy moments ; could he arrest the hot and burning thought as, like lightning, it rushes through his soul, and draws after it that wondrous train of association which brings back the scenery, the feelings, the regrets, the transports of early life, and sits before him, in their

sweet and youthful colouring, all that time had nearly staled and worn out of remembrance; man might hope to leave behind him fond and durable records. But, a fallen, every way a fallen creature, he is only destined to catch a glimpse of the irradiations of genius. When he has housed the produce, instead of a rich harvest he finds that he has merely arrested the poor meager gleanings of a finished conception; of that conception which age shall presently denude, should the chances of mortality be permitted to spare!

For time, gentlemen, as we know and feel, and I hope shall have virtue enough to let it influence our conduct, both religious and political; time is wearing out in us all the few and short powers that Providence hath thought fit to invest us with here, and only a pale colourless line will presently be left to tell us what and how rich our sensations once were. These are the consequences of declining life, and we have no refuge from them. We cannot bid the years roll back, and restring our nerves, and recruit our strength, and renew our spirits. We cannot, God be praised, subject them to the task of going through the same jaded circle of voluptuousness, of folly, and of madness. Of that which is formed with the most wonder, the decay is usually the most rapid. An invisible hand touches us, and we instantly feel a desolation spread through all our powers of mind. Our memory fails, our judgment fails, our ambitions lie down hopeless, heartless, disappointed! Our very affections droop and suffer estrangement! We feel as if all about us was strangely beginning to be cast into a new and awful mould; all undergoing alienation of one sort or other, until at length there is nothing left us but the ashes of our second childhood! This is the last pitiable state of humanity, and, creatures of an hour, let us repose in the Divine goodness, and forbear to sigh over it. For so dreadful in our apprehensions, what is it in itself? The return of

man, by a way he knoweth not, to his native innocence ; the gently ebbing back of all his tumultuous passions into their first quiet bed ; the preparation of a guilty repenting soul for those happier mansions in his "Father's house," whither he is hasting, and where, without this new nature awfully vouchsafed him, he might despair of being received. Grieve at that second childhood to which we see our beloved friends and relatives reduced ? No, believe me ; we know our Christian duties and our Christian consolations better. We bless the hand thus mercifully soothing and closing up the wounds which the world had made in their virtuous dispositions, their warm affections ; we hail the decay that enables them to cast off their earthly pollutions, and that sweetly lays them down in their quiet bed, with every uneasy thought after this sublunary state obliterated before they are called from it !

I am now, gentlemen, drawing to a conclusion. I have taken my time in committing this Letter to the press. I am not sorry for it. It has afforded me the opportunity of better reviewing and reconsidering the whole, and of contemplating the general face of affairs, and how men and things are going on around me. All I continue to see and hear and read, beget in my mind the persuasion that I have not erroneously described, or unduly estimated the danger of the present crisis ; that I have not presented a false and glaring view of the unhinged state of society among us, nor of the causes which have contributed to it. The pourtrait I have exhibited is not one which a warm imagination may sketch of the British empire, according to the force of present seducements or present panics ; it is not given as a thing which you may contemplate or turn away from ; which you may view as the exaggeration of party, or the prophecies of presumption ; as something that solicits notice from its sombre drapery, but that,

brought to the test of a sober experience, would fade into the tame colouring of ordinary occurrence. No—the scene is but too truly drawn from nature as it lies in its own hot and reaking deformity before our eyes. Nor think that you see the whole of the dismal pourtraiture. I have merely unrolled a part of the dark canvass. I have set before you “nothing like the image and horror of it.”

The pith and marrow however of the business, I think, comes to this. Either in the present crisis of affairs, we are, or we are not in danger of a revolution in this kingdom. Put the case, gentlemen, that we are in no danger of such an event, and that the foregoing picture is but the random sketch of fancy; how in such case stands the line of conduct pursued by our Whig adversaries and their more respectable followers? They are, by their continued appeals to the passions of the people, making them out of love with a government, that, whatever may be its defects, yet possesses a large portion of general esteem. They are agitating and unsettling a mighty mass of strength that, for the security of all parties, ought to lie dormant. They are teaching sober, honest, orderly subjects to think scorn of every thing that is intended, and of much that is effected for their good. They are clogging the legislature, in its most as well as in its least wholesome regulations, with impediments which cannot but have an ill effect on the administration of government. Instead of gratefully enjoying themselves in their abundance, and silently noticing and carefully and gradually remedying the abuses of the state, and the unavoidable miseries of poverty, they are setting all afloat on the large sea of reform, and risking the happiness (to take them on their own ground) of a quiet and well affected empire, without a chance of making any thing better by such a mode of procedure than they find it. No mighty good, therefore, are they effecting, even should the prospect of a revolution be doubtful and distant.

But, allowing that there is a probability of such a dreadful event, and a very great probability too, in what light can we then behold the conduct of our Whig reformers and revilers; our Albemarles, our Cokes, our Broughams, our Burdetts, and all that with vast landed possessions, or high talent, are advocating the bold notions of the present day? Why,—with intentions, far enough, I trust, removed from any thing beyond tumbling their opponents headlong out of power, they will have been drawing the line for revolution to proceed in, and giving to these evil spirits their best apologies for evil. They will have been turning many from an established government who would have engaged heart and soul in its support. They will have been furnishing every miscreant throughout the kingdom with his materials for rebellion, and giving to every seditious meeting, from Berwick to the Land's End, the sanction of their countenance, the weight of their authority, the credit of supporting their opinions. They will have been instructing every demagogue in the art of decrying established usages, and of undermining established institutions; and it is neither cure nor consolation to us to add, that, thus edging the sword for the day of slaughter, they will have been preparing for the confiscation of their own property, which that government they will have thus helped to overthrow has hitherto guarded and protected them in, and held as sacred as her existence. Which of these opposite opinions the country may take up and eventually rest in, there is no saying, though certainly many intelligent persons do deem a revolution not unlikely.*

* Of this opinion is Mr. Justice Marshall, as will be seen by the following extract from his charge to the grand jury of Chester, at the late assizes. "The true origin of much the greatest part of the increase of crime may, I think, be traced to the machinations of a certain description of persons actuated, some by a most daring

I will not positively declare that Mr. Coke of Norfolk is among this number, but, if he be, how deep the reproach that, under such an awful conviction, must rest on his past and present conduct. All extenuations of such conduct liberally allowed for, still—how deep the reproach!

There is, gentlemen, I repeat, but one way of saving the country in the nature and tendency of the present spirit of the times, and that is by unanimity. We must lay aside private feuds, private wrongs, private interests, and forget every good that is not connected with the salvation of the empire. Must we go to Pagan heroes and philosophers to teach us our Christian duties? “*Sed cum omnia ratione animoque lustraris, omnium societatum nulla est gravior, nulla carior, quam ea, quæ cum rep. est unicuique nostrum: cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui, familiares: sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est: pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem oppetere, si ei sit profuturus? Quo est detestabilior istorum immanitas, qui lacerarunt omni scelere patriam, et in ea funditus delenda occupati et sunt, et fuerunt*”*. And how nobly fulfilled they those duties, and how studiously avoided those villanies, distant as they were, in these their pure ages of patriotism, from the very dawns of Christianity. Amid the Persian banquets why retained Themistocles the Grecian spirit? On what principle avenged Brutus the violation of Lucrece, or commanded the Roman father the execution of a victorious and beloved son? Where died the revenge-

ambition, others by the hope of plunder, others by different motives equally criminal; but all of them manifestly aiming at revolution, and the subversion of the constitution of their country.” Judge Best too, I think, entertains sentiments not very dissimilar to these. And declarations of a like nature have occasionally been made in both Houses of Parliament.

* Cicero. De Officiis. Lib. I—17.

ful spirit of Camillus? Where paused the incitements to glory in the breast of Fabius?—In their regard, their deep, their perpetual anxiety for their country. The moment that solemn chord of the heart was touched, “their love, and their hatred, and their envy,” all perished!

Life had no charms, nor any terror fate
When Rome and glory called.

These noble minds, in the hour of peril, forgot every thing but the salvation of their country, and, in their estimation, that country was worthy of having every thing forgot for it. And is not, I beseech you, gentlemen, our country worthy of the like sacrifice, of the like immolation of all the narrow base passions of our nature? Actors in the scenes that have lately astonished and appalled mankind, we must remove us from the spot before we can judge of the prospect.—We must shake off all present prejudices and carry us forward in the annals of time, and fancy ourselves living in our posterity three or four centuries hence. From this advanced period and position, let us look back, as from some awful eminence, on the age in which we live, and the events that will have then ceased to “crowd on our aching sight.” With the selfish interests and vain ambitions obliterated that now forbid an impartial judgment of men and things, what see we? We see a nation, powerful among the kingdoms of the earth, exposed with them to a common danger and expecting to share a common fate.—We see her, suffering no jealousies to shake her faith or to palsy her strength, arming for battle, and standing up with an undaunted mien for the general freedom and existence. We see her leading forth the flower of her warriors, and fighting her way to the decaying thrones around her, and binding up their wounds, and cheering their spirits, and imparting fresh vigour to their counsels and fresh courage to their hearts. We see her animating their despond-

ing ranks, and exhorting, urging, commanding, mixing the heroism of her soul with theirs, and compelling them on to glory. We see this invincible nation on the shores of Abouker, of Copenhagen, of the Texel, of the Nile, pouring her thunders on the blaspheming adversary, and at Trafalgar, a name at once dear to our fame and painful to our remembrance, triumphantly taking into her hands the very destiny of the ocean. We see her, clothed in fire, passing over kingdoms and ruling over emergencies, and alike present in every quarter; in the plains of Portugal; in the provinces of Spain; in the passes of the Alps; in the heart of France. Where the brunt of the battle was, there was she. Where the thunders of the war were heard, the chearings of England were heard too. No soul talked of fear while she was nigh; none of flight. Her arm was strong and her eye was awful. She counselled for all; she felt for all; she fought, and conquered, and poured forth her best and dearest blood for all. And on the field of Waterloo, meeting the concentrated genius and power of the disturber of mankind, she immortalized her career of glory, by reducing him to the last curses of despair, and—O God! thine arm was here—sealing in his destruction the security of the civilized world!

It is matter of astonishment how any man can be found dead enough to generous feeling to dare to lift up unholy hands against such a country as this. Consider, gentlemen, with me this dear and generous England that they are so desirous to visit with reform and to blast with revolution. See her external port; what an air of majesty marks it; not of yesterday's growth, but venerable in wisdom and gathering respect from "length of days." See how her palaces adorn the land; what a soil and clime she boast; how her "valleys stand thick with corn, and laugh and sing." Look at the understanding, the industry, the skill of her husbandmen, as exemplified in the garden of our

Eastern shore. Look at her cities, each one a diadem of former days; her villages and hamlets, with "the voice of joy and health" yet in their dwellings; her commerce spreading over and embracing the world; her manufactures moving conjointly with her commerce, and hitherto defying competition; her charities pouring their rich stores through a thousand channels both at home and abroad; her sons, the theme of of praise, and deserving to be so, for in every transaction, left to their unstained feelings, the English statesman, soldier, scholar, merchant, are alike frank and manly; her daughters, at once the admiration of foreign empires and the pride and ornament of their own, stealing somewhat perhaps of the last polish of their manners from a neighbouring state, but still sacredly preserving the primitive delicacy of their minds; still building the English female character on its original dignified foundation, a native innocence and virtue.* All come from the same school; all

* There are few instances, and it speaks much in our praise, of a forgetfulness of gallantry in the English nation, and especially towards their own fair countrywomen. An example of this kind, however, lately occurred in, I am sorry to observe, our own neighbourhood, where, upon some public occasion, the chairman, I am informed, gave as a toast, and in a very marked manner, "Mrs. — and the *Whig* Ladies of the county of Norfolk." Here is a sufficient want of politeness and no great overplus of policy. But it is as yet, I hope, an insulated act of disrespect; and should the party venture to enter it on their books as a precedent, the Paphian deity, incensed at the insult, would obliterate it with scorn. The dominion of the sex must be considered as supreme. Where female delicacy is seen, party is submissive; where female virtue presides, party is awed. Where woman puts on her robe of innocence and beauty, she has the world at her feet, and annihilates all petty, political distinctions in a moment. "Mrs. — and the *Whig* Ladies of the county of Norfolk!" Blush ingrate, whoever thou art, blush for having thus attempted to sully the stream from whence man draws all that sweetens the cup of life, that hushes up its cares, and makes the blessed sun grateful to him!—But the *Tory Ladies* will have their revenge; for as Brutus was appalled by the spirit of Cæsar in the field of Philippi, so may Mr. Coke

are imbued with the same generous, just, religious feelings, impressed on them from infancy by one common nursing mother, part spiritual, part temporal, but in the majestic formation of national character strictly and sacredly indivisible, *the Established Constitution in Church and State!* O who would not wish for such a beautiful and beloved country, to carry with him to his grave the feelings of the expiring Antores?

————— cælumque

Aspicit, et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.*

When I bring before my view her departed legislators and heroes, the kings, counsellors, warriors she has produced; the noble deeds she hath atchieved; how her glory hath spread itself over the known world, and her mercy followed on the tract of her glory—when I consider these great things she has done, these great men she hath bred, these noble advantages she possesses, this grand and goodly appearance she puts on, and that in every distant age and clime, spurning a narrow sordid interest, she hath laid herself out for posterity, and scorning death and danger, has compelled the nations of the earth at once to tremble and adore—how unbearable is it to think that her life and dignity should be attempted by such low, groveling, vulgar instruments as, instigated by those of better condition, our disaffected cities and counties are daily pouring forth; that the restorer of peace and happiness to countless multitudes, returning, like the ill-fated Argive, from her fields of renown, should receive the poignard of the assassin from the objects of her affection, from those whom she had saved by her valour, and, had their miserable souls permitted, would have consecrated for ever in the recollections of posterity.

Look, gentlemen, as you would preserve yourselves

have to encounter the frowns of his fair adversaries when contending for life and death on the Castle-hill at Norwich.

* *Æneid*, Lib. X.

and your families, look to France, butchered and bleeding France, and with her limbs still quivering and convulsed, and take care of England. I ask not what we shall think of revolution at its acme, but how we shall feel when the scene only just begins to open upon us; when there is no more deference to authority, no more respect to age, no more tenderness to infancy, no more gallantry to sex; when all the distinctions which policy, which generosity, which a noble manly British spirit had created is fading away; when wealth is but pointed at for its plunder; when birth is but noticed to insult it; when domestic ties are acknowledged only to prove how easily they may be cancelled when that which gave life, and dignity, and delicacy to all is taken from all, and a savageness of manners, a rude insolent defiance of courtesy fills up every vacancy which the succession of our virtues has made? Yet this is nothing but the mere husk of the business, the first rough coating of the mind for revolution. The work of revolution itself will be performed on a higher scale. For this destiny you will behold the hordes of miscreants, without any thing human about them but the human shape, who, like the army of Anthonius, when you point to Cremona and offer it as their spoil, will lend their souls to iniquity in a thousand different ways, and perish under a thousand different forms for the possession of so enticing a treasure. Sense of injustice, bickerings of conscience, touch of remorse they will have none. All will be seared up with a red hot iron, and every unheard of cruelty they will put down in their list of mere common casualties. Their balance will be suspended in the slaughter house, and they will have their pound of flesh without baiting a single drop of blood. In vain, to meet such hot and maddening Alexanders, will Jaddus go forth in his pontifical robes. The sacred vails of our temples shall be suspended from our habitations in vain! We shall be

able neither to implore nor to "look their rage away." As to where and with whom this dreadful tragedy will end, that is a matter not worth a moment's notice. What signifies it to eyes that will soon be closed and hearts that will soon be cold; on whose heads the storm of revolution will eventually beat with the most fury, or how soon they may themselves be stretched on the rack, that, by their weak or wicked conduct, have brought these doctrines upon others. When Socrates has drank off the poisoned chalice, who will bestow a thought on the fate of Melitus? The furies that are ready to burst forth be assured will care nothing about either employers or opposers. They will prepare a common sepulchre and hurry into it, "no reckoning made," both the dignity and the wretchedness of the realm. They will yoke youth with decrepitude and beauty with deformity, and drive all alike before them to the "waste dominions of the dead," where one shroud shall be thrown over their multitudinous victims, and one dark dismal oblivion await their dissolution.

And now, gentlemen, forgiving the desultory nature, look well to the spirit and tendency of the foregoing reflections. Strip them of every extraneous covering. Take away from them all acrimony which is not deserved. Give no credence to representations which the "signs of the times" do not support. Repose no confidence in assertions which the existing state of things among us does not warrant. Look upon nothing in this Letter as said that, to your thinking, is not said in truth and righteousness, and with sufficient degress of probability to sanction and second it. For it cannot be any wish of him who would willingly act, so far as human infirmity will permit, a principled part, to desire that to go for truth which is without its sacred stamp, or to hope that aught should influence the mind which is built upon wrong notions, or false principles, or

partial, prejudiced, hasty views, or that is not honestly born out by the events accumulating upon us.—Baring then these reflections to their very pith and marrow, like jurymen on a trial of life and death, lay your hands upon your hearts and honestly give your verdict. If the state of this kingdom, political, moral, and religious, be not as I have represented it; if the spirit of the times be neither tending to democracy, nor, with such a tendency, would be injurious to our limited monarchy; if the dissenting interest be not daily increasing in influence and enmity, and daily operating upon, and adding to the large mass of national disaffections;* if a chain of disorganization be not forming link by link, and running through the heart of the kingdom, and binding up every doctrine dissonant to the quiet and welfare of the realm; if freedom of speech and the liberty of the press may remain in their present licentious state, and neither public peace, nor private comfort, nor the morals of the community be at all affected by it; if a sagacious eye can discern no similarity between the present state of England and that which brought about the destruction of France, or even if a revolution should come to pass in this country, do not contemplate it in all that horror with which warm and alarmed feelings may be apt to depict it; if you have large estates and care not how soon they are confiscated; comfortable fire sides and are heedless how long they may continue so; domestic relations dear to your hearts, but are in-

* I am not unwilling that these reflections should be judged of by this criterion alone. If the dissenting interest be not at the root of the present unsettled state of the kingdom, I have neither a hope nor a wish that the least regard should be paid to any thing I have advanced; for assuredly almost all my positions are built upon that ground. The dissenting spirit and the dissenting mechanism are every where equally visible. They have long done their religious, they are now doing their political work.

different as to how soon or how suddenly they may be dissolved ; if your nerves are of so steely a texture that you can look with apathy on all that makes good men “exceedingly fear and tremble”—if these, gentlemen, be the expression of your feelings, the decisions of your judgment, the fixt and settled determination of your souls, your course is before you—lend your spirit to the times ; cry out, with the dissenters, upon the persecutions of the church ; discard all who treat democracy with contempt, and, hailing with rapture the success of the “radical reformers,” pin your faith upon their sleeves, and enthrone them in your hearts, and give them power to become your arbiters of life and death.

But if, on the other hand, after fairly weighing and maturely digesting every circumstance here insisted upon, and comparing therewith every occurrence now passing before your eyes and in the face of open day, you are inclined to repose in the representations thus imperfectly set before you—if you believe that revolution, nurtured in democracy and dissent, may actually be drawing near to us—if you have quiet comfortable homes and desire to retain them, and faithful wives and innocent children and wish to preserve them, and landed possessions which you are in no hurry to have forced from you by ruffian violence, and little independent properties, the fruits of your honest industry, and are anxious to keep them for your own support in the decline of life, and for the sustenance of your families when you are taken away—if you have any regard for those ancestors, yet living in your remembrance and dear to your affections, who preserved their duty to their king and country, under every temptation to forget both ; who clung to and venerated the established church, and from that church received their sweetest earthly consolation, and, now that they are removed, may, through the same sacred instrumentality, be destined to partake of a

consolation still more sacred and lasting—if, in short, you respect the good old religion of your fathers, and disdain that dreadful pious hypocrisy which is entering into “kings’ palaces,” and lording it over an insulted realm ; bow down all your little envyings of heart, and shew a noble spirit of combined wisdom and patriotism, and throughout the kingdom support those men, and those only, whose souls burn with the same holy fire as your own, and who are anxious to advocate firmly, fearlessly, perpetually, the same holy principles ; those principles which have made and have preserved us a great and enduring people ; those principles which must for ever attach the freeholders of Norfolk to the HOUSE OF KIMBERLEY, and disjoin them from the HOUSE OF HOLKHAM ; from that house and all its branches—*mens agitat molem*—which are labouring night and day to consign such principles to ruin. You cannot patronize representatives of this cast and be consistent. You cannot patronize them and be safe. Their offences, in times like these, admit of no apology, no extenuation, no erasure. “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron.”

And in this patriotic, this noble determination to rally round an insulted and threatened monarchy, think not, gentlemen, that we shall stand alone.—Our adversaries, indeed, surprize us by their dexterity and deter us by a sort of resolute impudence ;* for

* From the second number of the Anti-Jacobin, a periodical work published at Norwich, and which I am sorry to find is not more regularly continued, it will be seen how this dexterity and resolute impudence work in that city. “In 1814 a petition was prepared against the corn bill ; and as this bill was very unpopular in the city, there would have been no difficulty in obtaining, in a fair way, a sufficient number of *real* signatures to answer all honest purposes. But this would not satisfy the party who took the lead—who seldom apply to parliament without attempting to deceive it, and who never appeal to the people without inflaming their minds against their governors. In the latter of these patriotic

they represent all as yielded that is yet in hand ; all as done that is yet to do ; every matter as settled that they wish to see settled ; every soul as already subdued and corrupted that they are dying with anxiety to corrupt. But give no credence to, be not cast down by their exaggerations, nor believe that they are carrying the nation before them because they are congregating their ranks, (and a most alarming phalanx they certainly present) with all the bad spirits of the nation. There is a large body of loyalty yet in the land ; a great mass of our population, awful by its virtue and mighty in its strength, that has never yet been fairly roused. They are not boisterous, they are

attempts, they made in the present instance rather an unlucky mistake, for the blow aimed at ministers fell plump upon the head of poor 'Squire Coke. Forgery and deception, however, flourished without controul, and the party were determined to out-do themselves. The management of the business was put into proper hands—and who so proper to take charge of the enormous roll as the secretary to the White Swan forgery? Mr. Smith received it from this guileless delegate, and presented it to the House as the petition of the *inhabitants* of Norwich only, and as containing the incredible number of more than 12,000 signatures. Had the Honourable Member been as quick sighted to the forgeries of his friends as he is to the supposed flaws of his enemies, he would at once have seen that he was presenting to the House falsehoods by the gross, calculated and intended to deceive it. He could not but know that the whole of the male population of the city amounted only to between 15 and 16,000. Had he thrown out of that number, children and others under age, with those who could not write, he would have found upon the principles of statistical calculation, that there were not 5000 male adults in the city who *could* sign their names, and that consequently, had the city been unanimous, more than 7000 *must* have been either forgeries or deceptuous signatures. But without going into the niceties of calculation, or calling upon Mr. S——'s profound wisdom to assist us, the commonest understanding in the city will clearly see that there *must* have been *several thousand* of these forged or fraudulent signatures." How does Mr. Smith exonerate himself from this charge? If the business be here correctly represented (and there may not perhaps be much doubt of it), it is a very serious charge.

not forward. They are not seen filling our County courts, our City meetings, our Crown and Anchor anniversaries, our Jacobin assemblages in every quarter for reform in church and state. They are quietly reposing at home. They are industriously earning their bread and living gratefully upon it. They are walking through life in the cool retired vale, wishing to live in peace, and to be permitted to enjoy such happiness as a good religion and a good government have long afforded them. These men will not lightly be moved by the seditious movements around them.— They will not believe that that state is out of order where so many of its subjects have been doing well, and where more might have done so but for their own unsettled tempers, and extravagant habits, and inordinate desires. These are the body of reserve which our country will call out in the hour of her danger.— These, composed of and comprehending various lowlier degrees, will array them in the strength of their obedience, and will shew our adversaries what the British laws, and government and religion really are ; what are their potency, their virtue, their intimate accordance with the happiness, their capacity of engaging, in return, the gratitude of the subject.

In this assemblage too we shall find the nobility, gentry, and clergy of the land ; all who have hereditary dignities and estates, honours, revenues, or lives to lose ; all who are capable of entering into the feelings, and of adopting the beautiful and correct sentiments of the orator ; “ *magnum est enim eadem habere monumenta majorum, iisdem uti sacris, sepulchra habere communia.* ”* Here also, had it pleased Providence to have spared him to our prayers, here we should have found a beloved and revered MONARCH, at once venerable in his years, in his vir-

* Tull. Cic. De Officiis. Lib. I. 17.

tues, and in his sufferings. His has been a long reign ; a reign of mildness and justice towards his people, and of tolerance to every sect of dissenters, but accompanied withal, (and we thank God for it as we would for the salvation of the state) by a firm, dignified, and most wise support of the ecclesiastical establishment. The principles that fixed him on the throne of these realms (whatever our ungracious adversaries may dare to insinuate) have never been infringed, never violated. These principles the Sovereign remembered when his Whig ministers forgot, and sacredly abided by when his Whig cabinet was rash enough to advise him to act in contradiction to. But he ruled in equity, and held the balance with a righteous hand. He has nothing to reproach himself for ; for “ meekly hath he born his faculties,” and clear hath he proved him in his “ great office.” While the exercise of power was vouchsafed him, he left no regret with any description of his subjects for having exercised it improperly. He did his duty by his people, and looked up to heaven for his reward. But now, in an hour of peril, the Empire is bereft of its mightiest, its holiest support. The voice is no longer heard that would have cheered our patriotic endeavours ; the will is no longer free that would have rewarded our patriotic services ! Alike insensible to pity or to praise, the love of his people that would have followed on his steps, and clung round his declining years, and softened and supported the decays of nature, is permitted neither to approach his understanding, nor to affect his heart ; for the darkness of the soul is fallen upon him, and although he “ see not the grave,” yet, alas ! are “ all his thoughts perished.”

And another loss, gentlemen, in our present emergency, we sustain ; another, and looking into futurity, a perhaps still deeper loss. The fair hope we had of a regular succession to the crown of these realms,

in a line which public opinion had sanctified, and was anxiously looking forward to, is broken. We had drawn around our late excellent young PRINCESS a national circle of righteousness and peace. We had pictured her restraining by prudent regulations a wild, ungovernable, imprudent age, and firmly and fearlessly administering the laws, under temptations and "fiery trials," almost to dispense with them altogether. We hailed in her the expectation of tender solicitude for the subject, blended with a proper sense of the dignity that ought to attach to the sovereign ; of a perfect recollection that she was to rule over a free people, who would neither be trifled nor tyrannized with, but with a recollection as perfect that it would constitute no part of her high and holy duty to be intimidated, or governed by a licentious people. But, alas ! that line which we fondly hoped would have run on for ages, the good, the beautiful, the virtuous line, hath been dissevered never to be united more. We have now, I fear, to look forward to unnumbered reigns, and to probable changes in the administration of a government whose strength depends on its consistency, and whose safety will be best promoted by as little change as possible. These hopes however are vanished, and others with them. One of the strongest checks upon the dissipated spirit of the times is gone. They who know the benefit of virtuous example in exalted stations will appreciate such a loss as we have sustained at such a portentous season, and will not wonder that the "overflowings of ungodliness" should "make us afraid." She was indeed the "rose and expectance of the state," and a grace and glory to her sex amid a large licentiousness of manners at home, and a corruption of morals in a neighbouring nation that has destroyed, with the decorums, the comforts of life, and almost annihilated the very notion of a moral sense. But majesty, and authority, and empire were spread before her in vain ;

in vain had life disposed of its most enchanting imagery in her paths, and connubial love, and parental affection, and friendship, faithful and delicate, sealed her earthly happiness.—All is over !

Let us remember then, gentlemen, and, in proportion as these losses weigh upon us, remember with a deeper regard the solemn pact that associates us with the defence of the constitution, civil and ecclesiastical, of the realm. We are the friends of that constitution, not because we happen to have it, and having it, are willing to preserve it ; but because it hath lived, and grown up with us, and it would be death to part with it ; because it unites in itself all that is most sound and correct in its religious, and all that is most equal and merciful in its political relations ; because in its spirit it is capable of making us a great, and in its wisdom of rendering us a virtuous nation ; because, under its protection, every man has been able to set beneath “ his own vine and his own fig tree,” and to enjoy the honest fruits of his industry, and with “ no man to make him afraid ;” because in its legislative operations it draws one vast and equal circle around every description of subjects, and there concentrates the wants, the wishes, the reasonable desires of all ; because contemplating it, finally, in all its provisions for the general happiness and security, our ancestors revered it from their earliest infancy, and left it in charge to us their posterity to continue to revere it when they were dead and gone. Here then let us take our station and remain immoveable. Born, bred up, educated in the principles of our excellent constitution in church and state, let us suffer nothing short of what eradicates life to eradicate them. At the awful verge alone where we leave all terrestrial concerns let us bid them farewell. But while we live in British land, while we breathe in British air, while the soul has power to feel the dignity and to appreciate the value of such principles, that soul will remain all over

English, and attached firmly, affectionately attached to our ESTABLISHED MONARCHY, our ESTABLISHED CHURCH, our ESTABLISHED LAWS and CONSTITUTION; convinced that they, and they alone, are capable of insuring the fullest dignity to the crown, the largest security to the realm, and (the key stone of their authority, the sacred pledge of our support) the most perfect and permanent happiness to the people.

And now, gentlemen, we separate, each of us as existence is wearing away, to our separate reflections. The period is approaching with the greater part of us when every man, who has been at all conversant with public affairs, must examine and must judge for himself; when not that which has gained for him the world's approbation; not that which, in moments of weakness or vanity, may have even delighted his own heart, but that which his retired thoughts, called home to their proper meditation, approve, shall be a comfort to him. There are seasons of political as well as of moral repentance. The range of our ambitious views will narrow and darken as the world closes in and darkens upon us, when the mind shall return to its forgotten feelings of sobriety, and gather up its happiness where it first found its virtue. No man, at the close of life, will regret that he was not among the number of those who excited popular clamour, under the pretence or delusion of increasing popular happiness. No man will repent as years steal upon him, that those years were not dedicated to the service of a party spirit against that government which protected, and that church which instructed him and his household. When the decays of nature operate on his mind, and he is casting the world, with its subtle politic contrivances behind him, he will see the littleness of all that he hath been contending for, and for how poor and lost a purpose he hath "put rancours in the vessel of his peace." He will see that though the age, and its follies and vices may not have

changed, yet that years, and coldness, and declining health and spirits, and deeper awfuller reflection will have changed him ; will have made him feel and confess, that, in the transcript of an enduring reputation, next to those who “fear God,” are they who, in a dutiful submission to rulers that are “not a terror to good works but to the evil,” truly “honour the King,” and who evidence that honour by supporting both the established government, and those who, by the wish of the people no less than by the voice of the sovereign, are called to its administration. It will be no grief to him to remember, when the staid and serious hour shall come in which all that hath cleaved to him that is not his proper self must be shaken off, all that hath taken mainly from his peace and added nothing to his virtue must be calendared no longer in his affections, that to the rule of the sovereign, to the security of the realm, to the quiet and comfort and prosperity of the community, he sacrificed many of his partial views and much of his inordinate desires—views that, at even less dangerous periods, he ought not perhaps to have entertained, and desires which at any period he would better probably have consulted his happiness to have obliterated. He will confess that an established order of things is evermore the best order, and a sober acquiescence therein the largest and highest wisdom.

In bidding you, Freeholders of the county of Norfolk, a last farewell, for on this ground, taking here my leave of Mr. Coke and of all County matters, we shall never meet more, permit me to observe that I am very anxious as to what judgment you may form of the foregoing opinions and sentiments, but far less solicitous as to what you may be disposed to think of the writer. He is passing through the vale of this world too much, I fear, like many of his cotemporaries ; reflecting on the years that are past with mingled feelings of penitence and reproach, and hardly know-

ing whether it be desirable, so "tied and bound" as we are with "the chain of our sins," to look forward to those which may yet be in reserve. What friends or foes may think of his lowly endeavours he must not suffer himself to consider, or how his reputation may be affected by these political disquisitions. It is not in a hot and feverish sphere of action like this, that any man is in a condition to say how far he may have deserved praise, or how intimately he ought to feel condemnation. We cannot rely upon our fame. We dare not rely upon our virtue. Much of that fame is often undeserved; much of that virtue is terribly mixt and chequered. Seldom do our best friends approve of every part of our labours; seldom, alas! do they equally gain upon our own approbation. The best we can do in any cause is but small, and is often made less by our inconsistencies; our occasional approximation to the crimes which we condemn, our frequent secession from the virtues which we recommend. All I can say; all that, in reviewing this letter, I dare to say is, that I have exonerated my conscience; I have performed my duty; I have done the best I can for the cause I support. I have done it in a good spirit, and, as I hope, for the furtherance of good. But though to purpose virtue be in the power of us all, the success of such endeavours rests with another power. There every man must leave the righteous intents of the heart; and there, so far as they are righteous, with such hopes as the mind may humbly and awfully entertain, do I leave mine.

FINIS.

LIST OF ERRATA.



- Page 16, line 7, for *strongly* read *strangely*.
25 — 35, for *about them* read *about him*.
28 — 4, for *corallary* read *corollary*.
54 — 24, for *Meonidas* read *Mæonides*.
60 — 8, for *kingdom* read *kingdoms*.
61 — 13, for *serpent* read *serpents*.
67 — 19, for *partizens* read *partisans*.
75 — 13, (of note) for *blinding* read *blending*.
86 — 19, for *Westmorland* read *Westminster*.
121 — 4, for *subborn* read *stubborn*.
32, for *proceeds* read *proceedings*.
123 — 35, for *assures* read *assure*.
128 — 11, for *disolate* read *desolate*.
169 — 31, for *deffinition* read *definition*.
182 — 17, for *Bellingfields* read *Bellinghams*.
236 — 38, for *effect* read *affect*.
238 — 27, for *domestic laws* read *domestic lares*.
347 — 35, for *boast* read *boasts*.

Frank
lost
M. O

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